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THE ROLE OF PATRICK BURNS IN THE  
DEVELOPMENT OF WESTERN CANADA

by

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A THESIS

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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA  
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled The Role of Patrick Burns in the Development of Western Canada submitted by Albert Frederick Sproule in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.





## PREFACE

The object of this study is to examine the role of Patrick Burns in the development of the livestock and meat packing industries of Western Canada. In 1890, the cattle industry of Alberta had reached the point where its continued growth made the development of new markets imperative. The situation was one of opportunity and challenge. Of the many men who responded to the challenge, Patrick Burns emerged as the dominant figure.

In view of Burns' accomplishments, one must search for the reasons for his success. In this study, emphasis is placed on the nature of the man and the events which explain why his energies were concentrated in certain directions. Evidence is presented to show that Burns integrated his efforts as a rancher, a manufacturer, and as a retailer, and that this approach was the foundation of his business. Considerable attention is given to the era between the mid 1890's and the outbreak of World War I for it was the most creative period of his life. The man and his deeds are the objects of judgments which serve to establish the perspective with which one can view his career in relation to the development of the Canadian West.

In establishing the facts surrounding the career of Patrick Burns, some difficulties have been encountered. He left no personal papers and as his meat packing interests were disposed of some years prior to his death, little other than those business records





pertaining to the administration of his estate survive. As twenty-five years have elapsed since his death at the age of eighty-two, those who had an intimate knowledge of the early period of his life are dead. Nevertheless, the writer has received valuable information from a number of pioneers, retired employees, and others who knew him. Newspaper items have been a major source of information but they have not always been found satisfactory.

The writer is particularly indebted to Mr. R.J. Burns, Q.C., and to Mr. J. H. Kelly, Q.C., President of Burns & Co., Limited, for the assistance they have given. Sincere thanks are extended to the executors of the estate of the late Senator Patrick Burns for giving their permission for this study to be undertaken.



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## CHAPTER I

### HIS EARLY LIFE (1854-1890)

In 1845 and again in 1846, a disastrous blight ruined the potato crop in Ireland and deprived the Irish of their staple food. The resulting famine started a great and continuing wave of emigration to other lands where the impoverished Irish hoped to take advantage of wider opportunities.

Michael Byrne was born in County Mayo, Ireland. He and his bride, Bridget, whose maiden name was Gibson, came to Canada in 1847. They secured a farm near Oshawa, Canada West, and on July 16, 1854, Patrick, their fourth child in a family of seven sons and four daughters, was born. In his adult life, Patrick transacted his business under the name of "Burns". The change in surname was the result of popular usage or perhaps a matter of business convenience. In time other members of the family followed suit.<sup>1</sup>

While farming near Oshawa, Michael Byrne used his horses to move families to the newly opening country in Victoria County to the north.<sup>2</sup> The possibilities of this area attracted him and in 1864

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<sup>1</sup>Information taken from data gathered by Mr. R. J. Burns of Calgary, a grandnephew of Patrick Burns. (Patrick Burns' birthday has always been given as July 6, 1856, but the date used here is the one given on his certificate of baptism).

<sup>2</sup>Correspondence with a relative by marriage of Patrick Burns: Mrs. Kathleen Gribben of Lindsay, Ontario. (Hereinafter referred to as "Gribben Correspondence").



he and his family settled in Eldon Township some three miles from the village of Kirkfield.<sup>3</sup> As a farmer, Mr. Byrne had a good eye for cattle, and besides raising them for market, he frequently bought and sold locally.<sup>4</sup>

The move to Kirkfield limited young Patrick's opportunity for education. Three miles of blazed trail through the forest had to be faced to reach school. Bush fires in summer and deep snow in winter deterred attendance. Wolves were still a prevalent menace. As he and his brothers grew older, their help was undoubtedly needed in clearing land, picking rocks, haying, harvesting and other farm operations. As a result, Patrick's formal education was meagre and like many boys of large families he sought to make himself self-supporting.<sup>5</sup>

Employment away from home was a problem for the young boy. Industrial jobs were lacking in this part of Ontario. Trapping was a possibility but the vagaries of the fur business made this occupation unattractive. Employment in lumber camps, in building roads, and in railway construction was for older men. Patrick, however, was not afraid of work and found a variety of jobs at small pay. On a farm near Derryville, a hamlet south of Beaverton, he worked from break of day until dark of night for something like fifty cents a day.<sup>6</sup> Two or three

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<sup>3</sup>Information taken from data supplied by Mr. R. J. Burns of Calgary.

<sup>4</sup>Gribben Correspondence

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.





summers were spent working for a man living on Thor Island in Lake Simcoe.<sup>7</sup> For a time he helped operate a little sash and door mill in Kirkfield where everything was made by hand.<sup>8</sup> The job of passing spikes to men on railway construction was another experience.<sup>9</sup> As he came to manhood, Patrick, like his brothers, spent the winters in the lumber camps. It is believed that lumbering attracted him to the State of Maine for a time.<sup>10</sup>

By 1878, when Pat was twenty-three years old, glowing reports of Manitoba and its Red River Valley were spreading, and like thousands of other Ontario youths, he was caught in the tide of western Canadian settlement.<sup>11</sup> At this time he had no intention of settling permanently on the plains. His plan, as he stated later in life, was to take up a homestead, improve it and sell it, and with the proceeds buy a neat little Ontario farm.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Interview Mr. Thomas Farrell of Calgary, July 24, 1956. (Mr. Farrell is a nephew of Patrick Burns).

<sup>8</sup>Gribben correspondence

<sup>9</sup>Interview Mme. Isabelle Burnada of Vancouver, August 23, 1955. (An old friend of Mr. Burns).

<sup>10</sup>Interview Mr. Thomas Farrell of Calgary, July 24, 1956.

<sup>11</sup>Gribben correspondence

<sup>12</sup>John Burns, "Burns & Co. Limited -- Its Founder and Early History", Canadian Canner and Food Manufacturer, December issue, 1935, p. 3. (The magazine was published at Gardenvale, P.Q. John Burns was a nephew of Patrick Burns).



One story relates that during the winter prior to going West, Pat had worked in the woods taking out logs. His employer had a poor year and his men were obliged to take part of their wages "in kind". Burns received two young steers. To him this did not spell a loss. With his farm background and his father's experience with cattle as an example, he accepted the animals. The money realized from the steers, added to dollars he had carefully saved, laid the foundation of his future in the West.<sup>13</sup>

Early in 1878, Patrick and his brothers John and Dominic set out for Manitoba.<sup>14</sup> Transportation between Lake Superior and Winnipeg was difficult in 1878. The head of Lake Superior could be reached by steamer but from there westward only a few scattered sections of railway were under construction.<sup>15</sup> The Dawson Road built by the government pending completion of the railway had proven so expensive and unpopular that it had been officially discontinued in 1876.<sup>16</sup> This route, however, was still a means of access to the West. When Patrick reached Rat Portage (Kenora), he feared that if he paid for transportation the rest of the way he might lack funds on his arrival. Undaunted, he bought

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<sup>13</sup>Gribben Correspondence

<sup>14</sup>Information taken from data gathered by Mr. R. J. Burns of Calgary, a grandnephew of Patrick Burns.

<sup>15</sup>Harold A. Innis, A History of the Canadian Pacific Railway (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1923), p. 89.

<sup>16</sup>John Murray Gibbon, Steel of Empire (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1935), p. 173.





some bread and cheese and, with his gun for protection, walked the rest of the way to Winnipeg.<sup>17</sup>

After arriving in Winnipeg in 1878, it would seem that Patrick and John were impressed by the reports of good lands to the west. That season saw many homesteaders attracted to the Rapid City district on the Little Saskatchewan River<sup>18</sup> (the Minnedosa). Somewhere in this area the brothers hoped to take advantage of the Dominion Homestead Act of 1872. Choice was practically unlimited for as Pat said later, "When I came west there was practically nothing beyond Portage la Prairie. It was all open prairie."<sup>19</sup>

Transportation by other means being too much of an expense, Pat and John set out on foot to locate their homesteads. In a few days they reached Tanner's Crossing on the Little Saskatchewan River. About eight miles north of there, Patrick found land to his liking. The brothers had walked 160 miles since leaving Winnipeg.<sup>20</sup> In 1882 the village on the west side of Tanner's Crossing was named Minnedosa.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Gribben Correspondence

<sup>18</sup>John Macoun, Manitoba and The Great North-West (Guelf, Ontario: World Publishing Co., 1882), p. 468.

<sup>19</sup>The Calgary Herald, May 10, 1928.

<sup>20</sup>The preceding remarks are based on a more detailed account found in the following source: J.W. Grant MacEwan, The Sodbusters (Toronto: Thomas Nelson, n.d.), pp. 34-35.

<sup>21</sup>Lyn Harrington, Manitoba Roundabout (Toronto: Ryerson, 1951), p. 129.



The locality where Burns' land was located is now known as the Clanwilliam district. Until the extension of the boundaries of Manitoba on March 21, 1881, his land was in the North west Territories.<sup>22</sup>

Burns now faced the problem of how to earn enough money to establish himself as a farmer. He returned on foot the 160 miles to Winnipeg to seek employment. Railway construction in the Ingolf and Cross Lake district east of Winnipeg provided work for a year. Pat's job was blasting rock at the wage of \$25.00 per month and his board.<sup>23</sup> The rock-blasting job over, he reached a decision which he later recounted as follows:

I had saved some money -- life had been hard enough and I decided I wasn't going to work for anyone else anymore. I bought a second-hand cart, a team of oxen, a second-hand plow and some supplies. I wanted to look like a real man so I went into a store and bought a hat, overalls and, finally, a pipe.<sup>24</sup>

With the exception of the pipe he put his investment to good use. He never acquired the smoking habit. The young man, now the proud owner of his first property, returned to Tanner's Crossing (Minnedosa). On the trip back he freighted some supplies for one of the Winnipeg

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<sup>22</sup>Statutes of Canada, Volume 1, Public General Acts, 1880-1881, Chapter 14 (Ottawa: Brown Chamberlain, Law Printer (for Canada) to the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty, 1881), p. 96.

<sup>23</sup>Elizabeth Baily Price, "'Pat' Burns", Maclean's Magazine, June 15, 1931, p. 15.

<sup>24</sup>Remarks recalled by Mme. Isabelle Burnada in an interview at Vancouver, August 23, 1955. (An old friend of Patrick Burns).





trading companies.<sup>25</sup>

The time required to "prove up" a homestead was three years. Records show that "Patrick Byrne" received a Homestead Grant from the Crown for the N  $\frac{1}{2}$  of 18-16-17, West of 1, on July 7, 1884.<sup>26</sup> The date indicates a lapse of six years from his arrival in Manitoba to the time he received title to the land. The delay may mean that Burns was a "squatter" for a time or had difficulty meeting a requirement such as residence on the homestead. In regard to "residence", one source states, "he and his partner Dave Drysdale took up adjoining homesteads and in order to qualify for their Deeds they built a shanty, half on each homestead, where they slept at opposite ends, or each on his own land."<sup>27</sup>

Information is lacking on Burns' actual farming operations at Minnedosa. Living off the farm alone may not have been possible. "The seasons of 1883, 1884, and 1885 were dry, marked by severe frosts and that of 1886 was a year of drought."<sup>28</sup> The fact that at that time there were no early maturing wheats to escape the frosts may have meant that grain was grown chiefly for livestock feeding.<sup>29</sup> The marketing of

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<sup>25</sup>Price, op. cit., p. 15.

<sup>26</sup>Information supplied by the Land Titles Office, Neepawa, Manitoba.

<sup>27</sup>\_\_\_\_\_, A History of Minnedosa and Surrounding District (75 Anniversary publication of the Town of Minnedosa, 1958), n.p.

<sup>28</sup>W.L. Morton, Manitoba: A History (University of Toronto Press, 1957), p. 210.

<sup>29</sup>Early maturing wheats of a satisfactory type were not available until new varieties were developed by William and Charles Saunders.



surplus grain would have been difficult until the coming of the railway, for wheat did not leave Minnedosa by rail until December, 1883.<sup>30</sup>

Financial necessity or his natural interests may explain why Burns branched out into the buying and selling of livestock, freighting, and contracting for putting up hay and breaking land. There was a demand from the incoming settlers for livestock and the increased tempo of railway construction provided a market for beef. Burns was particularly fitted to engage in the livestock trade. "His father before him knew the value of such a business for he, each year, procured several stall-fed cattle for the early spring market."<sup>31</sup> Patrick's initiation into the cattle trade had been as a boy when he made a profitable deal for his father.<sup>32</sup>

A relative of Burns states that Pat bought his first two heeves in Manitoba from a man by the name of McIntyre, and in order to save his small capital, he mowed prairie hay to pay for them.<sup>33</sup> Another story recalls that his first cattle transaction was the purchase of four milk cows from Mr. Stewart of Westbourne. The cows were sold for a profit and ...back to Westbourne went young Burns for more milk

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<sup>30</sup>The Minnedosa Tribune, December 7, 1883.

<sup>31</sup>Gribben Correspondence

<sup>32</sup>The Calgary Daily Herald, January 14, 1913. (The Vancouver Daily Province of May 10, 1926, states that Burns made his first cattle transaction at the age of eleven).

<sup>33</sup>Gribben Correspondence



cows. This time he planned to purchase six as his capital had increased. He intimated to Mr. Stewart that if he only had the money to buy them he could sell fifteen head. 'That's alright,' said Stewart, 'take them and give me a promissory note.'

'Alright,' said Pat, and the cattle were gotten together.

The night before Pat was to start out, a settlement was being made and Stewart said, 'Make out a promissory note for the difference.'

'You had better make it out, Mr. Stewart,' Pat said, 'I don't know how.'

'Neither do I,' said Stewart, 'so to h--l with the note; take the cattle and pay me when you have sold them.'

That was the spirit of the west born into two men from the east.<sup>34</sup>

In the cattle business the ability or lack of ability to judge the weights and market values of the animals spells profit or loss. This was especially true in the early days of the West when an advantage such as the weighing scale was a rarity except in the major shipping centres. Burns' ability to judge cattle was widely recognized at the peak of his career and has been rightly considered as contributing to his success. The Sodbusters describes two incidents which show that Burns exercised skill in buying cattle as a young man in Manitoba. On one occasion he appraised a steer as being worth \$30 which was only one dollar more than the value placed on the animal by

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<sup>34</sup>W.J. Wilde, "Out Where the West Begins", Canadian Cattlemen, (Vol. 10, No. 1, June, 1947), p. 28. (wilde states that he heard the story from one of Stewart's sons).





Harry Mullins, later considered one of the West's best judges of cattle.<sup>35</sup> In another situation Burns won a new hat in a wager over the weight of a three-year-old steer.<sup>36</sup> If necessity was a good teacher, surely the difficult years Burns spent in Manitoba did much to prepare him for the future.

Burns was able to spend considerable time "'dabbling' in the cattle business"<sup>37</sup> as homestead regulations called for only six months of continuous residence a year. During the other six months he made Winnipeg the centre of his operations.<sup>38</sup> He would go into the country and arrange to trail cattle into Winnipeg for disposal. The cattle were bought on time and when Pat returned from the city the settlers were paid the purchase price.<sup>39</sup> To assist him with the cattle, he had a collie dog. Once when passing through Rat Creek, west of Portage la Prairie, Mr. Hugh Grant, an admirer of the dog, asked Burns if he would care to sell him. He replied, "I wouldn't part with that dog for the price of these twenty cattle."<sup>40</sup> The word "drover" seems to best describe Burns' chief occupation while in Manitoba. In a sense he

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<sup>35</sup>MacEwan, op. cit., p. 36.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>37</sup>Price, op. cit., p. 15.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

<sup>39</sup>Interview Mr. Frank Brazil of Calgary, August 15, 1956.  
 (A former rider for Burns).

<sup>40</sup>Interview Miss Isobel Grant, U. of A. librarian, Calgary, July 25, 1956.



remained a drover all his life for in one way or another he was always bringing animals to market.

The cattle trade was not the answer to all of Burns' financial problems. While at Winnipeg he often did not have the "price of a bed."<sup>41</sup> He found other ways to augment his income. MacEwan states that he was engaged in freighting and custom work over a large area. South of Brandon he used oxen to break land under a contract held with Sir Clifford Sifton's father.<sup>42</sup> A former Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba once stated: "I saw him breaking the first prairie sod in the Brandon district with a walking plow, and he was doing a good job."<sup>43</sup>

The construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway west of Winnipeg saw the Burns brothers taking a small part. To quote a niece of Burns: "Uncle Pat and Uncle John supplied hay to the C.P.R. construction camps."<sup>44</sup> An author, referring to the Rocky Mountain construction camps of contractor James Ross, at a time one presumes to be 1884, states: "Pat Burns ...supplied beef for those camps that had beef."<sup>45</sup> As corroborating evidence seems lacking, the writer's statement may be more hearsay than fact. A remark made by Burns in a Senate speech in

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<sup>41</sup>Price, op. cit., p. 15.

<sup>42</sup>MacEwan, op. cit., p. 37.

<sup>43</sup>Calgary Albertan, July 7, 1931.

<sup>44</sup>Interview Mrs. A.C. Sparrow of Calgary, July 19, 1956.

<sup>45</sup>Gibbon, op. cit., p. 265.





1933 could have some bearing on the matter. "When I was at Vancouver in 1885, there were only a few small craft in port."<sup>46</sup> Burns' presence in British Columbia in 1885 may imply some business interest in the construction of the mountain section of the Canadian Pacific Railway as it is doubtful he was there for pleasure purposes only.

The words of a newspaper article may adequately suggest why Burns terminated his farming operations at Minnedosa. "Suffering many privations and hardships he remained here until 1885...."<sup>47</sup> Thus, seven years after his arrival in Manitoba, Burns turned to the full-time pursuit of livestock buying. He continued, however, to hold his half section at Minnedosa until 1899 when he sold it to Peter W.A. McPherson of the Rural Municipality of Clauwilliam.<sup>48</sup>

Two events could have encouraged Burns to concentrate his efforts in the livestock trade at this time. First, the long awaited completion of the railway link with the East took place in 1885. Previously Winnipeg was the chief market for Manitoba cattle and hogs but now the prospects of sending livestock to large eastern Canadian markets presented new possibilities. Secondly, the Riel Rebellion of 1885 brought about a rapid advance in the price of beef because of the

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<sup>46</sup>Debates of the Senate of the Dominion of Canada, 1932-1933, (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1933), p. 479.

<sup>47</sup>The Albertan, May 11, 1928.

<sup>48</sup>Information supplied by the Land Titles Office, Neepawa, Manitoba.



extensive purchases for the troops.<sup>49</sup> Although no evidence has been found to indicate that the Riel Rebellion had any direct bearing on Burns' activities, it is reasonable to assume that the improved market encouraged those interested in the cattle business.

Winnipeg, to a great extent, was now the headquarters from which Burns carried on his buying operations. He had some land near Bergen, a whistle stop just west of Winnipeg.<sup>50</sup> The property was probably used as a holding ground for feeding and finishing stock before sale or shipment.

Although Burns' activities no longer centered on Minnedosa after 1885, he was a frequent visitor there, being mentioned in at least eleven Minnedosa Tribune news items dating from April, 1885, to April, 1887. If the news items are a guide, he appears to have divided his time almost equally between cattle and hog purchases. An 1885 issue of the paper serves to substantiate that Winnipeg was now his headquarters as it identifies the former homesteader as "Mr. P. Burns of Winnipeg".<sup>51</sup> Two news items maintain his link with Minnedosa, one by saying that he was in town "visiting old friends",<sup>52</sup> while the other identifies him as "our well known cattle buyer".<sup>53</sup> His trips to

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<sup>49</sup>L.V. Kelly, The Range Men (Toronto: Wm. Briggs, 1913), p. 183.

<sup>50</sup>Interview Mrs. A.C. Sparrow of Calgary, July 19, 1956. (A niece of Patrick Burns).

<sup>51</sup>Minnedosa Tribune, September 11, 1885.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., December 4, 1885.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., April 2, 1886.



Minnedosa were well received for on one occasion the paper reported, "Mr. P. Burns was around again this week making farmers smile, by paying good prices for their hogs".<sup>54</sup>

The news items of the Minnedosa Tribune show that Burns' livestock shipments were leaving that centre in carload lots by way of the Manitoba and North Western Railway Company which connected with the Canadian Pacific Railway to the south. In April, 1886, he indicated he was prepared to boycott the Manitoba and North Western Railway Company because of unsatisfactory service and that he would drive his cattle to Portage la Prairie during the coming season.<sup>55</sup>

In the case of hog shipments, Patrick Burns has been given credit worthy of notice. When the Canadian Pacific Railway opened its freight service between Winnipeg and the East, he was the first to send a shipment to eastern markets. As the railway had not established its rates for such shipments, a charge was set with the understanding that if Burns lost money on his consignment, a rebate would be granted. The shipment was made and Burns informed the company that no rebate was needed.<sup>56</sup> The pioneer shipment consisted of five cars,<sup>57</sup> with some of hogs being purchased from one Adam Mackenzie.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>Minnedosa Tribune, October 1, 1886.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., April 9, 1886.

<sup>56</sup>The Calgary Herald, November 18, 1933.

<sup>57</sup>The Albertan, February 25, 1935.

<sup>58</sup>MacEwan, op. cit., p. 25.





The approximate date at which Burns shipped the hogs has proven difficult to determine. The last spike of the Canadian Pacific Railway between Winnipeg and the East was driven on May 18, 1885,<sup>59</sup> but September 1, 1885, was the date when it was hoped the road would be open for general freight and passenger business.<sup>60</sup> The September objective may not have been met, for another source says that "the summer of 1886 was the first during which there was direct service between Montreal and Winnipeg."<sup>61</sup> Items in the Minnedosa Tribune of August 6 and October 1, 1886, mention hog shipments Burns was making to Montreal. Lacking more exact information,<sup>62</sup> the summer of 1886 seems to be the time of the pioneer shipment of hogs to the Montreal market.

William Mackenzie, later Sir William Mackenzie of Canadian Northern Railway fame, was born and raised near Kirkfield, Canada West,<sup>63</sup> where he and the Burns children were childhood companions on neighbouring farms. William, who was five years older than Pat, usually superintended the potato picking operations on both farms.<sup>64</sup> In 1887, the

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<sup>59</sup>Arthur E. Copping, Canada To-Day and To-Morrow (Toronto: Caswell, 1911), p. 122.

<sup>60</sup>The Winnipeg Daily Times, July 15, 1885.

<sup>61</sup>D.B. Hanna, Trains of Recollection (Toronto: Macmillan, 1924), p. 61; Canada, Sessional Papers, Session of 1888, Sessional Paper 13, Appendix 4 (Ottawa: A. Senecal, Superintendent of Printing, 1888), p. 12.

<sup>62</sup>A letter to the Canadian Pacific Railway remains unanswered.

<sup>63</sup>W.S. Wallace, The Dictionary of Canadian Biography (2 vols.; 2d. ed.; Toronto: Macmillan, 1945), Vol. 2, p. 414.

<sup>64</sup>The Calgary Daily Herald, November 18, 1933.



construction of a railway to provide a shorter route to the Canadian seaboard by way of the State of Maine was begun.<sup>65</sup> William Mackenzie and Donald Mann, in conjunction with their partners, James Ross and Herbert Holt, secured the construction contract.<sup>66</sup> One important feature of railway construction in those days was the provisioning of large numbers of workers. Contractors had learned that meat should be fed two or three times a day to the men engaged in the gruelling tasks. William Mackenzie, on meeting his boyhood friend, Pat Burns, saw a man with considerable experience in the livestock business. Mackenzie acquainted him with the proposition of provisioning the railway workers and Pat subsequently landed a contract in Maine. The contract proved to be an important step in Burns' career. The Maine venture removed him from Manitoba where he might have remained an obscure cattle buyer. Subsequent meat contracts for railway construction brought him to surroundings which allowed him to exercise his initiative to the utmost.

P. Turner Bone, author of When the Steel Went Through, recounts an episode which occurred in Maine near the end of construction in 1888. A railway official had informed Mr. Bone that Burns would take care of the provisioning of the track-layers at Mattawankeag. Some mistake was made and Burns had nothing on hand for the hungry men to eat. After a "hot wordy battle" between Bone and Burns, the latter corrected the situation.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>65</sup>P. Turner Bone, When the Steel Went Through (Toronto: Macmillan, 1947), p. 134 ff.

<sup>66</sup>Hanna, op. cit., p. 120

<sup>67</sup>Bone, op. cit., pp. 141-142.



Before continuing with Burns' business activities, it should be mentioned that in 1888, his father, while about to embark for home after a trip to Ireland, collapsed and died in port.<sup>68</sup> In August, 1899, his mother died at the old pioneer home near Kirkfield, Ontario.<sup>69</sup> In previous years, two of his brothers and three of his sisters had also died.<sup>70</sup>

The next railway construction job which beckoned was the building of the line between Regina and Prince Albert in the North West Territories. The company which had initiated the project was the Qu'Appelle, Long Lake and Saskatchewan Railroad and Steamship Company,<sup>71</sup> but for obvious reasons the line was referred to as the Regina and Long Lake road. Some track had been laid north of Regina but financial difficulties had brought construction to a stop. The financial problems were solved and in the summer of 1889 the Mackenzie and Mann firm began work.<sup>72</sup> Burns held a contract to supply the construction camps with meat. By mid-September, 1889, between 800 and 1000 men were employed on the job.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>68</sup>Information supplied by Mr. R.J. Burns of Calgary. (A grand-nephew of Patrick Burns).

<sup>69</sup>Gribben Correspondence

<sup>70</sup>Information supplied by Mr. R.J. Burns of Calgary.

<sup>71</sup>Robert Dorman, A Statutory History of the Steam and Electric Railways of Canada, 1836-1937 (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1938), p. 495.

<sup>72</sup>Saskatchewan Herald, August 7, 1889.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., September 18, 1889.





Burns made his headquarters about twenty miles north of Regina "at the junction of Boggy Creek and the Qu'Appelle, about a mile east of the present site of Lumsden".<sup>74</sup> He boarded at the house of a farmer named Reynolds "and rode about the country on a smart pinto pony, buying steers from the valley farmers and for the most part doing his own butchering."<sup>75</sup> The end of December, 1889, saw construction halted due to the onslaught of winter.<sup>76</sup> During the cold weather Burns had an experience which could have cost him his life. A youth named Zachary M. Hamilton and Mr. and Mrs. Malcolm Ferguson were wintering a small beef herd near Eyebrow Lake over fifty miles west and slightly north of Burns' headquarters. Hamilton's story follows:

One cold night in December we heard the crunch of a horse's feet outside and a knock sounded at the door. As far as we knew there was no one living within a long day's travel; it was the time of the 'Messiah craze' among the Sioux in Montana and the Dakotas, and parties of these formidable Indians were reported to be coming into the country in an endeavor to stir up the Crees and Saulteaux of the Qu'Appelle to take the warpath against the white men. Consequently it was with some apprehension that we prepared to admit our midnight visitor. Ferguson lighted a lantern and went to the door, while I 'stood by' with a rifle. Our fears, however, were groundless. At the door was a short, chubby man in boots and spurs, wearing a long buffalo coat, and leading a pinto pony. He was so cold he could hardly speak. Ferguson brought him in to the warmth of the shack, and Mrs. Ferguson commenced to get him a hot meal, while I bestowed his horse in a cattle shed before a good rack of hay.

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<sup>74</sup>Regina Leader-Post, February 24, 1937.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid.

<sup>76</sup>Saskatchewan Herald, January 1, 1890.



When he thawed out he told us his name was Burns, and he was supplying beef to the railroad workers. While hunting for three steers which had strayed away from his bunch, he had missed his direction in a snow flurry. He came upon Ferguson's haystacks on the valley flats and, seeing no sign of habitation, tried to make a somewhat icy bed in one of them. It was anything but a satisfactory resting place, and he was forced to crawl out and stamp about to keep his feet from freezing. Suddenly he saw a light through the naked trees and he followed it to our shack.

He was pretty well used up and spent two days with us recuperating. He was greatly concerned about the loss of his steers, and stated that it was a serious setback. Finally he rode briskly off, both man and horse considerably rested and refreshed. It was characteristic, that when the first freighter of the spring took the long trail from Moose Jaw to Saskatoon, he came under instructions 20 miles out of his way to deliver to Mrs. Ferguson a good supply of things then regarded as luxuries by the pioneers, with the compliments of 'Pat' Burns.<sup>77</sup>

Burns' appreciation for help was also shown when George Wilson of Dundurn sold him thirty-five head of cattle. He had not sufficient funds to pay Wilson and as the latter did not press for settlement, two months elapsed before the debt was cleared. At Christmas time Burns remembered Wilson's kindness by making him a gift of a pure bred Shorthorn bull.<sup>78</sup> Despite the difficulties which threatened Burns in 1889, he was still in business when the Regina and Long

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<sup>77</sup>Z.M. Hamilton, "Burns Got Start in Career in Valley 20 Miles From Regina", Regina Leader-Post, February 24, 1937.

<sup>78</sup>MackEwan, op. cit., p. 38.



Lake road was being pushed to completion in the summer of 1890. A Saskatoon news item stated that "Mr. Burns, beef contractor for the railway, brought 25 head of young cattle from the north this morning."<sup>79</sup>

The twelve years which had elapsed since Burns left Ontario did much to prepare him for the future. He had worked hard at a variety of undertakings and had gained valuable experience, particularly in the livestock industry. The trust which people placed in him when he purchased cattle with only the promise to pay, speaks highly of his integrity and fair dealing. A reputation for responsibility was to be one of the great assets of his business life. The hardships which he met seemed but to strengthen his confidence and add to his versatility.

Patrick Burns' career can be followed with greater understanding by an examination of the man. In 1890, Burns was thirty-six years old and was still a bachelor. The fact that he remained a bachelor for several years thereafter may partly explain the gusto with which he entered various projects. He was free of the hesitations a man with a wife and family might have had. He was free to come and go, to set his own hours, to make decisions, to take risks. A tent, a boarding house, a hotel room, or a railway coach were his homes.

In Burns' case, it does not seem wise to accept the stereoc-

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<sup>79</sup>Edmonton Bulletin, May 31, 1890. (Repeating a Saskatoon news item).





typed picture of the dress of a man of the West in the 1880's or 1890's. His activities and whereabouts changed so frequently that to see him in any distinctive garb during his early life seems out of place. He was five feet seven inches in height,<sup>80</sup> although when seated he appeared taller, as his torso was long in relation to his short legs.<sup>81</sup> What Burns may have lacked in height was compensated by a square shouldered erectness and a full bodied frame.<sup>82</sup> He looked his best on horseback where he showed a natural grace and poise. On foot, Burns had a rolling sailor-like gait.<sup>83</sup> His gait, however, was no handicap to his quickness of foot. Quick in all his movements, Pat could move his stubby legs with surprising speed. He loved impromptu foot races in which he could usually outrun younger or longer limbed opponents.<sup>84</sup>

Burns' features were firm, full, and regular. In his thirties, his hair was a dark colour, but judging from later pictures, may have

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<sup>80</sup>Interview Mr. Bill McRae of Calgary, July 5, 1953. (Mr. McRae, a long-time employee of Burns, remembers a pair of mules being measured to see if they were under the maximum height for work in the coal mines. When they were found to be five feet seven inches in height, Burns, who was present, remarked that he was the same height).

<sup>81</sup>Interview Mrs. Ralph Davey of Brooks, Alberta, August 13, 1956. (Mrs. Davey was the first lady stenographer in the Burns office).

<sup>82</sup>Interview Miss Kathleen Ellis of Penticton, B.C., August 18, 1955. (A sister-in-law of Mr. Burns).

<sup>83</sup>Interview Mr. John J. Tighe of Calgary, July 27, 1956. (Mr. Tighe served in the offices of P. Burns).

<sup>84</sup>Interview Mrs. A.C. Sparrow of Calgary, July 19, 1956. (A niece of P. Burns).



been receding at the temples. During all his manhood he wore a mustache, at first rather generous but later more trimmed. If one holds with the belief that there are things about a person's physical make up which gives evidence of his nature, one might fancy that Burns' eyes and hands offered the best clues. His deep set eyes had a piercing quality, a quality which was heightened by his custom of looking a person squarely in the face. His hands were broad, thick fingered, and strong.<sup>85</sup>

Burns was an active, even restless man. When there was business on his mind, and there usually was, he could not sit still. He would rise, thrust his hands in his pockets, pace up and down, and from time to time mutter under his breath. When the automobile came into use, he loved travelling at high speeds because much time could be saved if you pushed the machine to its limit, yet he never learned to drive. In matters of business he kept all hours but this did not prevent him from being an early riser. Despite his restlessness, he was not a bundle of nerves. He had the ability to relax and could snatch a ten or fifteen minute nap whenever or wherever he could. In his dealings with others, he was seldom brusque or impatient.<sup>86</sup>

In matters of interest to him, the man was an attentive listener,

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<sup>85</sup>Interviews: Mr. J.H. Kelly of Calgary, August 1, 1956. (Mr. Kelly was a secretary of Mr. Burns); Mme. Isabelle Burnada of Vancouver, August 23, 1955. (A friend of Mr. Burns).

<sup>86</sup>Interviews: Miss Kathleen Ellis of Penticton, B.C., August 18, 1955; Mr. John M. Glendenning of Nanton, Alberta, October 6, 1956. (Formerly a cattle buyer for Burns).



a searching questioner, a keen observer, and a storehouse of facts.<sup>87</sup> His formal education, scarcely more than an introduction to the three "R's", may explain why he developed such qualities. It is doubtful if more than his signature on documents survives at this time although there are those who recall reading short directives and personal letters in his hand.<sup>88</sup> If Burns avoided writing, it is understandable, for he may have been quite aware of his inadequacies. It appears that he confined his reading to his personal papers, important business communications and a glance at the newspaper.<sup>89</sup> His limitations in both reading and writing may also partly explain why he was constantly on the move, doing his important business in person, and why he later took full advantage of the telephone. As his business expanded, Burns assigned his paper work to an office staff and a private male secretary accompanied him on his business trips. The less time Burns spent in an office chair the better he liked it.<sup>90</sup>

Burns had no shortcomings in arithmetic. He was excellent with figures, being able to calculate with close accuracy the answer to a problem before someone with pencil and paper could work out the

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<sup>87</sup> Interview Mr. J.J. Tighe of Calgary, July 27, 1956.

<sup>88</sup> Interviews: Mr. Bob Carry of the Turner Valley district, Alberta, August 21, 1956. (Mr. Carry was a rider for Burns); Mr. R.J. Burns of Calgary, September 2, 1955. (A grandnephew of P. Burns).

<sup>89</sup> Interview Mr. R.S. Tribe of Olds, Alberta, August 23, 1956. (An early office employee of P. Burns).

<sup>90</sup> Interview Mr. R.S. Tribe of Olds, August 23, 1956.





result.<sup>91</sup> It seems obvious that his ability with figures coupled with a superb memory gave him an advantage in the countless transactions he had to consider during his lifetime.

Despite his Canadian birth, Burns' manner of speech and his use of certain words and expressions disclosed his Irish ancestry.<sup>92</sup> He could be witty and was quick to see a joke but in general showed a serious disposition. When excited, he was apt to stutter.<sup>93</sup> A repetition of expressions such as, "Look it, look it now," or "To be sure, to be sure," customarily introduced his remarks in a conversation.<sup>94</sup> On the telephone a series of "Hellos" readily identified the speaker.<sup>95</sup> His vocabulary was not large<sup>96</sup> and his grammar was not the best. Burns was not a man of salty speech but "Damn it" and "My God" were oaths he used in an exclamatory way.<sup>97</sup> In discussing his affairs he

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<sup>91</sup>Interview Mr. R.S. Tribe of Olds, August 23, 1956.

<sup>92</sup>A conclusion which can be made in listening to acquaintances of Burns repeat conversations they had.

<sup>93</sup>Interview Mr. W. Mayhew of Midnapore, Alberta, September 3, 1955. (Burns' chief gardener for 20 years).

<sup>94</sup>Interview Mr. Ed. Hoschka of Calgary, March 3, 1956. (Mr. Hoschka was in Burns' employ for years).

<sup>95</sup>Interview Mr. Ed. Hoschka, March 3, 1956.

<sup>96</sup>Information obtained from typewritten notes compiled by Mr. J.J. Tighe of Calgary, a long-time employee of Burns. P. 29A of notes.

<sup>97</sup>Interview Mr. J.H. Kelly of Calgary, August 1, 1956. (Mr. Kelly is now (1962) President of Burns & Co. Ltd.).



had a close mouth, a virtue he wanted in those in whom he placed his trust.<sup>98</sup>

In examining Burns' personal habits and interests one soon realizes that he had none that would distract him from concentrating on business. As a non-smoker he was never prostrated by any lack of tobacco. The saloons had no attraction for him for he despised the abuse of liquor. If circumstances did call for a drink, he was sure to give his a thorough nursing. Limited to possibly three romances, the last of which ended in marriage he spent a negligible amount of time in the company of women. He had no interest in cards, was an unpractised dancer, and pursued no hobbies or recreations. As wealth and prestige came his way, he side-stepped attempts to get him into politics, avoided being a club man, and preferred to remain in the background in his support of charities. He never knew a genuine vacation.<sup>99</sup>

The man's pleasures were simple and he was devoid of eccentricities. He enjoyed food, particularly relishing beef. His hearty appetite may have been linked with a diabetic condition which did not show up until later in life. Although he was not known to sing or whistle, he enjoyed music, particularly listening to a good singer. Irish songs, perhaps those heard in his childhood, held a special

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<sup>98</sup>Interview Mr. Kelly, August 1, 1956.

<sup>99</sup>Interviews: Miss Kathleen Ellis of Penticton, B.C., August 18, 1955; Mme. Isabelle Burnada of Vancouver, August 23, 1955.



appeal to him. He was fond of the company of his friends, was attracted to small children, and established a reputation as a hospitable host. A Roman Catholic, he liked going to church on Sundays, but hated any parade of religion. Patrick Burns' spirits were always buoyed by the beauties of nature and if somewhere in the scene a fat herd of cattle was quietly grazing his contentment was complete.<sup>100</sup> Fortunately for the peace of mind of the cattle, they never knew what end was contemplated for them.

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<sup>100</sup>Interviews: Miss Kathleen Ellis of Penticton, B.C., August 18, 1955; Mme. Isabelle Burnada of Vancouver, August 23, 1955.





## CHAPTER II

### FIRST YEARS IN ALBERTA (1890-1897)

With the Regina and Long Lake railway nearing completion in 1890, the further development of the story of Patrick Burns turns attention to the south-western part of the North West Territories. Here lay Alberta, not the Province of Alberta as created in 1905, but a smaller Alberta whose boundaries had been drawn to constitute one of the postal districts of the North West Territories.

Among the centres of population of Alberta in 1890, the place destined to be closely linked with the name of Patrick Burns was Calgary. Located at the juncture of the Elbow and Bow Rivers, Calgary had its origin when the North West Mounted Police established a fort there in 1875. For the next few years the population of Calgary consisted of the N.W.M.P. detachment, employees of the Hudson's Bay Company, the men of I.G. Baker and Company, and a scattering of Indians and traders.

Calgary became a distribution point before the construction of railways into the western prairies began. The American firm of I.G. Baker and Company, with headquarters at Fort Benton, Montana, freighted a large portion of the supplies used in the early settlements of southern Alberta. After the goods were brought by river steamer to Fort Benton, the head of navigation on the upper Missouri, the company's bull teams hauled supply wagons northward along the Whoop-Up Trail into Alberta. The service by necessity terminated at Calgary. The use of



bull teams on the trail between Calgary and the northern centre of Edmonton was not feasible as the soil would not support the heavy wagons, especially in wet weather.<sup>1</sup> A stagecoach and itinerant traffic travelled between Calgary and Edmonton but the latter community's heavy supplies were brought in over eastern routes by Red River carts and river transport.

In 1883, westward construction brought the Canadian Pacific Railway to Calgary. Two years later Calgary had transcontinental connections. The transcontinental railway and the existing north and south trails put Calgary in a cross-roads position which encouraged development. Other points on the transcontinental line traversing Alberta<sup>2</sup> grew slowly while Calgary made headway as a centre of trade and distribution and as a place from which settlers might fan out into the surrounding country. Promising centres such as Edmonton to the north and Fort Macleod and Lethbridge<sup>3</sup> to the south had to wait until branch lines linked them with the transcontinental railway. In 1890, Calgary, with a population of 3,786, was the largest centre in Alberta.<sup>4</sup>

In 1890, cattle ranching in Alberta had a history of but fourteen years. Prior to 1876 there was a scattering of oxen used in

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<sup>1</sup>Calgary Herald, September 3, 1955, p. 14.

<sup>2</sup>Medicine Hat was in the postal district of Assiniboia.

<sup>3</sup>A narrow gauge line connected Lethbridge to the main line in 1885.

<sup>4</sup>Lethbridge Herald, February 24, 1937.



transportation and a few cattle kept for dairy purposes but there were no true range herds. In the summer of 1876 a small herd made its appearance in the range country near Fort Macleod. It consisted of one bull and fourteen cows with their calves, totalling about twenty-seven head. The cattle were brought from the Sun River district of Montana by John B. Smith who sold them to a member of the Mounted Police named Whitney.<sup>5</sup> Whitney, or "Old Bob" as he was later known, turned twenty-five of the cattle loose on the open range to fare as best they could. Winter came and passed and in the spring of 1877 when two riders went out to gather the cattle all twenty-five turned up in fine condition. The first spring round-up held in Alberta was an unqualified success.<sup>6</sup>

Some small herds were brought in during 1877. In the same year impetus was given the infant cattle industry by the signing of Treaty No. 7 with the Blackfoot Indian tribes. One consequence of the treaty was that the Indian Department brought in some 800 cattle in 1878.<sup>7</sup> The buffalo were dwindling in number and the Indian Department had the responsibility of providing the Indians with meat. Treaty No. 7 also encouraged individuals to enter the ranching business for now efforts were made to confine the Indians to their reservations, an action which gave cattlemen greater security. For a number of years

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<sup>5</sup>R. Gordon Mathews, "The Ranching Industry in Canada," Macleod Gazette, January 17, 1902. (As Mathews was the secretary of the Western Stock Growers Association and refers to Smith and Whitney in a first hand way his account of the first range cattle in Alberta seems preferable to information such as that found in The Range Men published in 1913).

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.





the Indian Department and the Mounted Police were able to absorb the bulk of the cattle being marketed.<sup>8</sup> I.G. Baker and Company carried on most of the contracting for the supply of the Indian Department and the Mounted Police with beef.<sup>9</sup>

Before 1880, the range land of Alberta was free for the taking and much of it remained free after that date. In 1880, Orders in Council provided for the leasing of grazing lands at the nominal rate of one cent an acre, although when competition occurred, the party offering the highest premium above the lease rate obtained the land. Individuals or companies could obtain single tracts up to 100,000 acres under a twenty-one year lease on the understanding that the leases would be stocked at the rate of one head for every ten acres of land by the end of the first three years.<sup>10</sup>

In addition to leases taken up by those already ranching and by other westerners entering the business, the new regulations attracted eastern Canadian and British capitalists who previously lacked assurance that money invested in western ranching schemes would be protected by a legal landholding system. Among the larger well-known ranches established by distant financiers were the Cochrane, the Bar U, the Oxley, and the Walrond ranches. In the development phase of Alberta

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<sup>8</sup>L.V. Kelly, The Range Men (Toronto: Briggs, 1913), p. 50.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>John Proskie, "Trends in Security of Tenure of Grazing Lands in Western Canada," Canadian Cattlemen (Vol.2, No. 1, June, 1939), p.200. (Lease regulations were made more restrictive as the years passed).



ranching, the cattle needed to stock the pioneer ranches were trailed in from the United States. In 1883 it was estimated that there were about twenty-five thousand cattle between the Bow River and the American boundary.<sup>11</sup>

The first step to find a sale for cattle outside the local Alberta markets took place in 1882 when Jack Lauder started for Winnipeg with a drive of about four hundred head of beef steers from the Cochrane Ranch. In reporting the matter, the Macleod Gazette hailed the event as the "real commencement of our cattle trade".<sup>12</sup> Oddly enough, later issues of the paper do not mention whether the drive succeeded and there seem to have been no similar attempts to reach the Winnipeg market.

The beef requirements of the work camps of the Canadian Pacific Railway during its construction across the prairies and mountains and the needs of the soldiery during the Riel Rebellion of 1885 stimulated the price of western beef. In 1884 and 1885 prices reached a high of 14 cents per pound whereas the usual price both before and after these dates stood in the neighbourhood of four cents per pound.<sup>13</sup>

Although Calgary was connected to Winnipeg by rail in 1883, Winnipeg was unable to absorb any appreciable amounts of Alberta beef. There were some experimental shipments from Alberta to Winnipeg in 1884

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<sup>11</sup>Proskie, op. cit., p. 156.

<sup>12</sup>Macleod Gazette, August 14, 1882.

<sup>13</sup>Kelly, op. cit., p. 183.



but the prices received were not attractive and shipping facilities on the new railway required improvements.<sup>14</sup> No doubt Manitoba producers could easily meet the demands of their own urban communities and they were in a good position to meet outside competition. Rail connection with Eastern Canada was realized in 1885 when gaps in construction north of Lake Superior were finished. Manitoba cattle were the first to travel the new railway to the East. In the latter part of 1886 a Mr. Bell sent an experimental lot of three cars from Winnipeg to the British market.<sup>15</sup>

Export of cattle from Alberta ranges to the Montreal and British markets took place in 1887. In the fall of that year a force of men completed stockyard accommodation at Calgary for a shipment planned by Fred Stimson, the manager of the big Bar U Ranch. On Tuesday, October 11, 1887, under the guidance of Bar U foreman, George Lane, and the noted Negro rider, John Ware, the cowboys loaded 236 head of prime three to five-year-old cattle on a freight bound for Montreal. At Montreal a number of the beasts were put aboard an Allan S.S. Co. vessel and they continued their way to Glasgow. In all, the Bar U, the Oxley, and the Winder ranches, seem to have sent about 1500 head of cattle to the new markets in the fall of 1887.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Kelly, op. cit., p. 167.

<sup>15</sup>MacLeod Gazette, December 7, 1886.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid: October 11, 1887; October 18, 1887; October 25, 1887; November 22, 1887.





The export of cattle to Britain involved problems which were not immediately solved. The cattle were usually well received as to size but there were appeals for more attention to breeding. More care was required in making shipping arrangements because any lack of feed, water, or rest during the long rail and ocean trip caused considerable loss in weight. The wild range cattle did not take kindly to confinement and frequently injured themselves in transit. In addition, the jolting of the freight trains and the rolling of the ocean vessels also caused injuries. The animals would sometimes arrive in such bruised condition that their meat was practically unsaleable. Many shippers found that the additional profits expected in the British market would be more than wiped out by losses caused in transit.<sup>17</sup>

A letter written by a resident of Glasgow to a resident of Alberta after the arrival of one of the 1887 shipments shows that the occasion was a memorable one:

Our butcher told me the other day, that the ranch cattle that came here are so wild no one can come near them. They had to be taken through the streets at night and even then the last batch knocked down eighteen lamp posts. They are not in good condition and the meat is hardly saleable. The animals had to be shot.<sup>18</sup>

In respect to the opening of the British Columbia market for Alberta range cattle, the picture is not as clear as one might wish. Dorothy Diller, in her thesis, "The Early Economic Development of Alberta",

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<sup>17</sup>Macleod Gazette: December 20, 1887; January 11, 1888; June 20, 1888.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., December 28, 1887.



and best, received considerable attention. The readers were informed in some detail that Mr. William Mackenzie and Mr. Donald D. Mann were in their midst. The news was welcome because the presence of these railway contractors meant that immediate action was forthcoming in the Calgary and Edmonton Railway Company's plans to link Calgary with its smaller neighbour to the north. The Royal Hotel also had its guest list published. Perhaps some Calgarians may have noticed that one "P. Burns, Regina", was in town. On July 23, 1890, the Calgary Herald identified Mr. Burns as a "railway sub-contractor" for the line being built to Edmonton. At this time the readers of the Calgary Herald would scarcely have guessed that the thirty-six-year old "railway sub-contractor" would establish himself as one of the foremost men of the West. Certainly, Patrick Burns would not have realized that he had reached a turning point in his life.

Burns had again secured a contract to supply railway construction camps with meat. The "C. & E.", as the new line was popularly called, was officially begun when the Hon. Edgar Dewdney, Minister of the Interior, turned the first sod at a public holiday and celebration held on July 21, 1890.<sup>22</sup> Construction was begun at Calgary and pushed northward. On December 5, 1890, the C & E track reached Red Deer,<sup>23</sup> where winter weather halted construction until the following April. On July 15, 1891, to the disappointment of the residents of Edmonton,

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<sup>22</sup>The Calgary Herald, July 22, 1890.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., December 6, 1890.



states that the first shipments to British Columbia took place in 1890.<sup>19</sup> A news item in an 1889 issue of the Calgary Herald indicates otherwise: "The North West Cattle Company shipped a train load of fat cattle to British Columbia early this morning."<sup>20</sup> As the report received no embellishment, it may mean that the event was not considered unusual and that occasional shipments were taking place on an experimental basis before 1890. At any rate another new market for Alberta beef was being explored.

The ranching industry of Alberta was well established by the year 1890. Cattle production had reached the point where outside markets were being developed to dispose of the surplus. In 1890, the Canadian Pacific Railway carried 352 head of Alberta cattle to British Columbia markets, while shipments to the east and consignments bound for Britain totalled 3,155 head.<sup>21</sup> Calgary, located near the north-western fringe of the range country, was in the best position to serve the industry.

On Monday, July 14, 1890, The Calgary Herald, following the custom then prevailing, published the names of guests registered in Calgary hotels. The guest list of the Alberta Hotel, Calgary's newest

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<sup>19</sup>Dorothy Diller, "The Early Economic Development of Alberta (Previous to 1905)" (unpublished Master of Arts thesis, University of Alberta, 1923), p. 99.

<sup>20</sup>The Calgary Herald, May 29, 1889. (A normal train load of cattle approximated four hundred head. In Alberta the North West Cattle Company was otherwise known as the Bar U Ranch).

<sup>21</sup>Kelly, op. cit., p. 252.





the last spike was driven on the southern bank of the North Saskatchewan River.<sup>24</sup> The uncrossed river barrier left the railway terminal in the little settlement which became Strathcona.

The recollections of Harold W. Riley furnish a picture of Burns in the fall of 1890 at a construction camp of the C. & E. railway.

We had just got started at our meal when there were sounds of another approaching team coming along the road. This proved to be a team and democrat driven by 'Pat' Burns. In the democrat he had a carcass of dressed beef, neatly covered with canvas. Once more the cook poked his head out of the tent and exclaimed, 'Hullo, Pat, unhook and feed your team and come in and have something to eat.' In a few minutes a well-built muscular man entered the marquee. He was dressed in a pair of somewhat soiled overalls, supported by a leather belt, and wore a greyish-blue shirt, also somewhat soiled, without a collar, and an old battered hat, much the worse for wear. He was introduced in a typical western fashion as 'Pat' Burns. While we were eating our dinner, another big, muscular man, wearing a black felt hat tilted at a sort of gambler's angle over his right eye, entered the tent. He said 'Hullo Pat' to which salutation Mr. Burns rose and said 'hello Dan' [sic] and they shook hands in greeting. This proved to be 'Dan' Mann, who was superintending the installation of the rails around a curve in the line where the hamlet of Balzac is now located.<sup>25</sup>

One of Burns' employees on the meat contract had a weakness for liquor, and lacking money for drink, stole one of Pat's horses and rode to High River where he sold it to Dan Riley for seventy dollars. Late at night, Pat arrived in High River on the trail of the thief, "Old John". He was found and admitted everything. Dan Riley returned the

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<sup>24</sup>Edmonton Bulletin, August 1, 1891.

<sup>25</sup>The Albertan, February 25, 1937.



horse and got his money back, with Burns making up a difference of fifteen dollars which Old John had spent. Burns did not turn Old John over to the police but "typical of the man, he said, 'John, you're coming back with me to go to work.' The scene closed with Burns and John seated side by side in Burns' democrat driving back to the meat camp and leading the stolen horse."<sup>26</sup> Ordinarily a horse thief was not tolerated in the West but Burns in his "typical" gesture displayed that kindly side of his character for which, over the years, he became well known.

Supplying the railway construction camps with meat required some organizing ability. One problem was to keep a constant supply of meat reaching the camps. In order to do this the contractor had to buy his beeves some time before the meat was required. Competitive buying would have to be contended with and an unforeseen rise in the price of cattle could jeopardize the expected profits on a contract. Arrangements had to be made for riders to have the cattle at specific places at specific times. Problems of feed and water on the trail at the place of slaughter had to be met. At camps where hundreds of men were being fed, daily butchering was a necessity. A block and tackle and a tripod of poles was the essential butchering equipment. In a limited time, due to the absence of refrigeration, the meat had to be in the hands of camp cooks.

The holding of wild range cattle on the unfenced prairies or in

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<sup>26</sup>J.W. Grant MacEwan, The Sodbusters (Toronto: Thomas Nelson, n.d.), pp. 38-39.



the bush was a problem. MacEwan tells of an incident in which a number of Burns' cattle disappeared. Immediate replacement was required to keep the construction camps in supply. Riding hard, Burns caught up to one of his riders en route to Calgary 85 miles away. Some terse instructions were given. The cowboy rode to Calgary that day, secured a replacement herd, and was on the trail back by nightfall.<sup>27</sup>

Only a little information can be gleaned from newspapers about Burns' activities in fulfilling his meat contract with the C. & E. railway. A September, 1890 news item reported: "The Glengarry Rancho Co. have made a drive of 200 head of beef cattle to Calgary. They have been sold to Mr. Burns, beef contractor for the Calgary and Edmonton contractors."<sup>28</sup> In April, 1891, an issue of the Edmonton Bulletin stated that Mr. Twohey, buyer for P. Burns, the beef contractor for the C. & E. railway, had been in the district offering six cents a pound for beef but that the farmers were holding out for seven. The editor, Mr. Frank Oliver, expressed pleasure that the agricultural development of the Edmonton district had reached the place where cattle could be exported to other points.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> MacEwan, op. cit., p. 62. (The November 26, 1890 issue of The Calgary Tribune states: "He has not yet recovered his 28 head of Glengarry Ranch cattle that went astray some weeks ago....")

<sup>28</sup> Macleod Gazette, September 25, 1890. (Possibly the Glengarry cattle mentioned in this item was the herd from which a number of head were lost).

<sup>29</sup> Edmonton Bulletin, April 25, 1891. (Two separate items).





In 1890 Patrick Burns built a small slaughter house at or near the present site of the Canadian National Railway's roundhouse in East Calgary.<sup>30</sup> It is said that his office was a railway box car which could be loaded on a flatcar and moved to various centres of activities.<sup>31</sup> Although the slaughter house was initially built to handle cattle killing for the railway contract it was soon furnishing meat for other demands. Burns would "buy what animals he needed, have them delivered to his little slaughter house, and there, perhaps working the entire night, he would kill and dress the animals ready for delivery the next day."<sup>32</sup>

It should not be thought that Calgary was devoid of establishments in the meat business before the coming of Patrick Burns. On the basis of newspaper advertisements, one would judge that three firms were well established in business. Hull Brothers, the Canadian Agricultural, Coal and Colonization Company (North-West Trading Co.) and F.G. Topp and Company each had slaughtering facilities and retail outlets.<sup>33</sup> Other meat outlets probably existed but their names do not appear in newspapers. Possibly to the regret of the newspapers, Burns never seemed to rely heavily on advertisements to publicize his business. No Burns' advertisements have been noticed in the leading Calgary paper until after

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<sup>30</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, October 13, 1923.

<sup>31</sup>Elizabeth Baily Price, "'Pat' Burns", Maclean's Magazine, June 15, 1931, p. 16.

<sup>32</sup>The Albertan, February 25, 1937, p. 3.

<sup>33</sup>The Calgary Herald, December 4, 1889.



1900, thus making it difficult to ascertain facts about his local business for many years.

Burns did not wait for the completion of the C. & E. railway in July, 1891, before he looked for other business opportunities. There are reasonable grounds to suggest that during the winter of 1890-91, while railway construction was at a standstill, he was active in buying and selling cattle. The March 20, 1891 issue of the Calgary Herald reported that Burns had recently shipped 80 head of cattle to Vancouver. The shipment does not look impressive until it is remembered that only 352 head of Alberta cattle entered British Columbia the previous year.<sup>34</sup> Whether or not the March, 1891 consignment represented Burns' first venture in British Columbia markets cannot be accurately determined but it is evident that he was among the first to ship range cattle to that province.

In addition to cattle shipments, Burns found another way to further his business in 1891. After the disappearance of the buffalo, it was necessary for the Government to supply Indians of western reservations with beef. Each year public tenders were accepted with the lowest tender securing the contract. Burns secured a contract to supply beef to Indians of the Blood Agency near Lethbridge.<sup>35</sup> The contract, running from July 1, 1891, to June 30, 1892, seemingly covered the Lower Blood

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<sup>34</sup>Kelly, op. cit., p. 252.

<sup>35</sup>Kelly, op. cit., p. 260. (P. Burns was one of the unsuccessful tenders for a beef contract with the Indian Department for the year 1893-1894. See The Macleod Gazette and Alberta Live Stock Record, April 28, 1893).



Reserve, for an 1891 newspaper item notes that D. McGregor of Manitoba had the contract for the North Blood Reserve.<sup>36</sup> The report of the Auditor General for the year ending June 30, 1892, shows Patrick Burns receiving \$20,665.35 on his contract.<sup>37</sup> His account was probably not closed at that time as he received an additional \$1,756.55<sup>38</sup> for the year ending June 30, 1893, bringing his total payment to \$22,421.90.

The August 31, 1891, issue of the Macleod Gazette carries an account of how the meat rations were handled on the Blood Indian Reserve. As the story falls within the time of Burns' contract it may refer to his operations.

These rations are issued on four days in the week, on Mondays and Thursdays at the agency proper, and on Tuesdays and Fridays at the upper agency. The number of beeves will amount to between 50 and 60 a month, varying of course according to the weight of the animals killed. These animals are driven up by the contractor and shot. They are then hung up in the slaughter house and butchered by the Indians. The beef is afterwards cut into pieces of two or three pounds each, and distributed to the Indians at the rate of 1.30 lbs. per day to each man, woman and child on the reserve ... there are 1,700 .... The slaughter house and pen and corral are kept scrupulously neat and clean. After the animals are slaughtered, the floors are all cleaned off thoroughly, a force pump and hose being used for this purpose ....

George Lane, a man destined to become one of Alberta's most famed ranchers, was associated with Burns in the Indian contract.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Lethbridge News, June 2, 1891.

<sup>37</sup> Canada, Sessional Papers, Vol. 1, Session 1893, Sessional Paper 1 (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1893), p. D106.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., Vol. 1, Session 1894, Sessional Paper 1, p. 125.

<sup>39</sup> C.I. Ritchie, "George Lane -- One of the Big Four", Canadian Cattlemen (Vol. 3, No. 2, September, 1940), p. 442.





He looked after the slaughtering and distributed the meat. On one occasion Burns drove out from Fort Macleod to see how things were going.

When he arrived at the corral where they were slaughtering, Burns noticed that Lane was having trouble with the last steer. This big fellow, with long horns, had become infuriated and had broken away taking Lane's lariat with him. There was an Indian on a pony, watching the competition between man and steer and Burns said to him, 'You hold my team and lend me your pony while I help with that steer.' Burns was a good rider; he seemed to be built for the saddle, but there was trouble ahead this time. According to his own telling, he was closing in on the long horn when the animal looked up at the newcomer wearing a hard hat and said to himself 'this is my victim.' The steer charged with the best of aim because he completely upset the horse and rider. He lost no time getting organized for the next charge but Burns was on his feet and heading for the corral fence. But he was leading a losing race when George Lane saw the seriousness of it all and drew his 'six-shooter' and dropped the steer. It was Senator Riley's comment that Burns' record for the 100 yard dash on the Blood Reserve, still stands.<sup>40</sup>

An extension of the C. & E. railway to Fort Macleod was undertaken in the fall of 1891. Some three hundred men were engaged in the work.<sup>41</sup> When work was resumed in the summer of 1892 a Calgary paper stated that Burns was supplying the beef for the project.<sup>42</sup> The line was completed in September, 1892.<sup>43</sup>

At some time in 1892, Burns' first slaughter house in Calgary was destroyed by fire. He soon purchased superior facilities and

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<sup>40</sup>MacEwan, op. cit., pp. 39-40.

<sup>41</sup>The Macleod Gazette and Alberta Live Stock Record, December 17, 1891. (Hereinafter referred to as "The Macleod Gazette").

<sup>42</sup>Calgary Tribune, June 15, 1892.

<sup>43</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, September 9, 1892.



butchering operations continued apace.<sup>44</sup> It would seem, however, that for the first few years Burns gave more attention to the buying and selling of cattle on the hoof than to the handling of dressed meats. No evidence has been found to indicate that he operated a retail market in Calgary in the early 1890's.

With railway construction on the prairies tapering off at this particular time, Burns went into the cattle business on a firmer basis. Presumably, for his previous operations, he would have required land on which he could hold cattle for short periods, a matter which could be handled by temporary arrangements. Now, in addition to buying cattle for immediate slaughter or shipment, he needed land on which he could run cattle to condition them for marketing or butchering.

Burns' policy, especially for the next few years, was to acquire cattle and fatten them for market rather than raise his own.<sup>45</sup> His policy arose from a situation that plagued the ranching industry throughout the years. In the late summer or fall, ranchers sold their animals, often in such large numbers that the market could not comfortably absorb them, and prices were depressed. Many of the animals

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<sup>44</sup>Canadian Canner and Food Manufacturer, December issue, 1935, p. 4. (The magazine, apparently in error, states that the facilities were purchased from The Canada Land and Ranch Company. This company, sometimes called the Canadian Land and Ranch Company, came into existence in 1895 when the Canadian Agricultural, Coal and Colonization Company was reorganized. See: Calgary Daily Herald, September 20, 1897; The Gleichen Call, August 20, 1908; Robert Moon, This is Saskatchewan (Toronto: Ryerson, 1953), p. 65).

<sup>45</sup>Kelly, op. cit., p. 51.



offered for sale were not in marketable condition, but for financial necessity or to avoid wintering, were let go. Burns' specialty was to buy such animals and to winter feed them for the high prices to be obtained in the spring before cattle being finished on grass came in off the ranges. Needless to say, he also held cattle through the summer to be finished on grass.

A man whose herd did not include breeding stock was termed a "beef" rancher.<sup>46</sup> In order to become a beef rancher, Burns needed ranch land. Although it cannot be established as clearly as one might wish, it is suggested that Pat Burns and Cornelius J. Duggan were partners in the establishment of the first ranch. Burns and Duggan travelled to Manitoba and bought five hundred "stockers"<sup>47</sup> to put on land they either bought, leased, or "squatted on" about ten miles east of Olds, a village some fifty-five miles north of Calgary on the C. & E. line. The district around Olds was attractive to a man engaged in fattening cattle. It was widely known as good hay country, haying being a chief occupation of the early settlers. The village of Olds was nicknamed the "Hay City".<sup>48</sup>

Burns' land east of Olds lay along or near Nine Mile Coulee through which flows Lone Pine Creek. Here there was ample water and

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<sup>46</sup>Kelly, op. cit., p. 50. (Kelly states that I.G. Baker and Company were the first "beef" ranchers in Alberta).

<sup>47</sup>Interview Mr. Bill Duggan of Calgary, August 27, 1956. (A relative of the late C.J. Duggan).

<sup>48</sup>Interview Mr. Newsom, editor of the Olds Gazette, August 23, 1956.





shelter to handle cattle. The buildings on his first holdings were not elaborate, possibly an indication of the tenure on which Burns held the land. It is said that a log building, now demolished, served as quarters for the ranch hands for some years. The buildings were located on the northern end of Section 23, Township 32, Range 28, West of Meridian 4.<sup>49</sup> In fixing a date for the establishment of the Olds ranch, the years 1892 or 1893 seem likely.<sup>50</sup>

In later years buildings were erected on land about six miles to the south of the original quarters. This property also bordered Lone Pine Creek but had the additional advantage of having an ever-flowing spring. The buildings of the "South Place", as it was known still stand on N.E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of 34-31-28-W.4.<sup>51</sup> A few miles east of the Burns' properties a body of water goes under the name of "Burns Lake".

The full extent of the Burns holdings east of Olds in the 1890's has not been determined. L.V. Kelly's book The Range Men, is a rich source of information about ranching developments in Alberta. In one of his remarks on Burns which could date as late as 1912, Kelly refers to "two ranches, five thousand and three thousand acres respectively,

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<sup>49</sup> Interview Mr. David Schroeder, a farmer east of Olds, August 23, 1956.

<sup>50</sup> Archibald Oswald MacRae, History of the Province of Alberta (2 vols.; n.p.: The Western Canada History Co., 1912), Vol. 2, p. 809.

<sup>51</sup> Interview Mrs. Fred Witzke, a farmer's wife east of Olds, August 23, 1956.



twelve miles east of Olds, with leased lands adjoining."<sup>52</sup> In the matter of leased lands, there is no evidence that they were obtained from the Dominion Government.<sup>53</sup>

Information about the early activities on the Olds ranch is scanty. The fact that it was the first Burns ranch has helped make this so. Men who were familiar figures there in the early years are now dead. The ranch's location on the northern fringe of the range country and its modest size in comparison to many of the ranches south of Calgary are additional factors which have tended to keep it in the background. Newspaper items of the 1890's furnish some information. In the fall of 1893, Mr. Howell Harris, manager of the Circle Ranch, turned over five hundred cattle to Burns at Calgary. It was believed that Burns would drive them "north" and ship them to B.C. markets later in the winter.<sup>54</sup> In March, 1894, an item stated that Burns was shipping cattle overseas from his ranch.<sup>55</sup> Cattle shipments at this time of year normally indicates that winter feeding is being carried on. In May, 1894, it was reported that he had made four shipments from the Olds ranch that spring.<sup>56</sup> Taken together, the information in these news items seem to bear witness that the ranch, as has been claimed, was used

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<sup>52</sup>Kelly, op. cit., p. 52.

<sup>53</sup>Correspondence with the Dominion Archivist.

<sup>54</sup>The Lethbridge Herald, November 30, 1893.

<sup>55</sup>Semi-Weekly Calgary Herald, March 13, 1894.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., May 11, 1894. (An Olds news item).



as a "beef" ranch. Although other news items can be interpreted in a similar way, conclusive evidence as to the purpose of the Olds ranch appears in an October, 1897, news item:

C. J. Duggan, manager for P. Burns, will ship a large trainload of young cattle from Cassils to Olds on Monday, where they will pasture during the winter. They have another 1,000 head in the south.<sup>57</sup>

The role of the Olds ranch during Burns' first years in Alberta should not be underestimated. It was here that he tried himself as a beef rancher. That he was successful in this role must in part account for the ever increasing scope of his activities. In establishing the ranch, Burns laid one of the cornerstones of his business empire. Now he had a source of supply which would assure a portion of his market needs. The second cornerstone was already laid. At his abattoir in Calgary, he could slaughter cattle for the dressed meat trade. The third cornerstone was put in place when Burns took steps to establish retail outlets which would absorb a great number of the cattle which went through his hands.<sup>58</sup>

Cornelius J. Duggan, Burns' partner in the establishment of the Olds ranch, merits some attention. "Con" Duggan, of Irish parentage, was born and raised near Fenelon Falls, not far from Kirkfield, where Burns spent his youth. Like Burns, Duggan travelled much of the distance west on foot. It is possible that they became

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<sup>57</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, October 30, 1897.

<sup>58</sup>For organizational purposes, the writer has placed the details of the development of the retail markets in the next chapter.





acquainted in the East but it is a certainty that they came in contact with each other on western railway construction jobs where Duggan held contracts for the supply of ties and timber.<sup>59</sup>

Duggan was a big, husky, broad-shouldered, blue-eyed man of very erect posture. Six feet one and one-half inches tall and weighing 220 pounds, he could put a 450 pound barrel of salt into a freight wagon single-handed. At an early age he started smoking cigars, finding that the taking of one was an acceptable substitute to the steady stream of drinks he would be offered in the social centre of every frontier community -- the barroom. He wore neatly trimmed chin whiskers and, when conditions permitted was impeccably dressed.<sup>60</sup>

Duggan's association with Burns continued throughout the years. He was in partnership with Burns on many of his cattle dealings as well as having his own cattle and other business interests. Until his retirement he bought thousands of head of cattle for Burns and administered Burns' ranch properties. Duggan was conservative in his ways. His "keep what you got" attitude was in contrast to the imaginative spirit of Burns.<sup>61</sup> As manager of the ranches, Duggan's experience and common-sense approach was invaluable in the planning and checking of deals and

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<sup>59</sup>Interviews with relatives: Mr. Jack Duggan of Edmonton, March 17, 1957; Mr. Charlie Duggan of Camrose, June 3, 1956; Mr. Bill Duggan of Calgary, August 27, 1956.

<sup>60</sup>Interviews: Mr. Jack Duggan of Edmonton, March 17, 1957; Mr. Charlie Duggan of Camrose, June 3, 1956; Mr. Bill Duggan of Calgary, August 27, 1956.

<sup>61</sup>Interview Mr. "Scotty" Rowland of Calgary, August 29, 1956. (A former employee of Burns).



in keeping operations going smoothly.<sup>62</sup> He knew the number of cattle in every herd, the amount of hay in every stack, the location of every ranch hand, and all the details of horses and equipment.<sup>63</sup> He had deep consideration for the treatment of horses and cattle and always avoided the killing floor of the abattoir.<sup>64</sup> The cowboys found Duggan gruff in manner, stern and exacting in his ways;<sup>65</sup> not a man to take another into his confidence quickly.<sup>66</sup> In conversation he was all business, not having the easier manner of Pat Burns. Duggan preferred the outdoors; men who worked in offices were "paper men".<sup>67</sup> He did not believe that cowboys needed fancy "grub" or accommodation. Except for the understanding that an outstanding roan horse called "Buttermilk" be available for his use, he never demanded any special consideration in the cow camps. A bunk on the floor and whatever food the cook had on hand was all he needed in bodily comforts.<sup>68</sup> One of his standing

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<sup>62</sup>Interviews: Mr. Douglas Hardwick of Calgary, July 7, 1956; Mr. John Glendenning of Nanton, October 6, 1956. (Both men are pioneer cattlemen of Southern Alberta).

<sup>63</sup>Interview Mr. Herb Clark of Calgary, October 6, 1956. (A former employee of Burns).

<sup>64</sup>Interview Mr. Jack Duggan of Edmonton, March 17, 1957.

<sup>65</sup>Interviews: Mr. Jack Duggan of Edmonton, March 17, 1957; Mr. Bob Foster of Calgary, August 27, 1956. (Mr. Foster was one of Burns' ranch foremen).

<sup>66</sup>Interview Mr. R.S. Tribe of Olds, August 23, 1956. (Mr. Tribe was employed in the offices of P. Burns).

<sup>67</sup>Interview Mr. R.S. Tribe of Olds, August 23, 1956.

<sup>68</sup>Interview Mr. E.J. "Bud" Cotton of Calgary, August 26, 1956. (Mr. Cotton rode for Burns).



instructions was "Never take a hoof that doesn't belong to us. If you do, get it straightened up!"<sup>69</sup>

C.J. Duggan was keenly aware of the value of a dollar but on one occasion was thought to be extravagant. One summer he had a large number of men putting up hay in vast quantities. A prominent rancher stopped by and expressed the opinion that Duggan was wasting money. Duggan's reply was short. "When there's hay to put up, I'll put it up!" The following winter proved very severe and the consumption of hay was great. The same rancher came around to buy some of Burns' surplus hay.<sup>70</sup> Adequate reserves of hay for winter feeding was one principle of ranching that Patrick Burns and Cornelius Duggan never overlooked. Some ranchers, lulled into a sense of security by a series of mild winters, suffered disastrous losses when a severe winter occurred. As the years passed and the number of ranches operated by Burns increased, it was particularly fortunate that C.J. Duggan superintended their operation.

A number of men can be associated with Burns in his first years in the cattle business. One widely known figure was Walter Wake, recognized as "one of the best judges of beef cattle in the west".<sup>71</sup> He was born in Somersetshire, England, but at an early age his family came to

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<sup>69</sup>Interview Mr. Emil Hoschka of Olds, August 23, 1956. (Mr. Hoschka rode for Burns).

<sup>70</sup>Interview Mr. Jack Duggan of Edmonton, March 17, 1957.

<sup>71</sup>Kelly, op. cit., p. 25b.





Canada and homesteaded near the Burns farm in Manitoba. His father became one of the leading cattle buyers of that area. Like Pat Burns, Walter Wake went to the State of Maine for the construction of the "Short Line", and was engaged in butchering for the meat contract. He was with George Lane when the latter was associated with Burns in the beef contract for the Blood Indian Reserve in 1891 and 1892. From then until before the first World War, in addition to the pursuit of his own interests, Wake was often engaged in buying cattle for Burns. He looked after much of the cattle buying from the Bow River south to the American border. The quiet, hardheaded Englishman in the big, black hat, contributed in no small way to the success of his employer.<sup>72</sup>

Jack Monaghan was another man who played his part in the growth of Burns' cattle empire. At an early age he left his native Ireland for the gold fields of Australia. Later he arrived in San Francisco and drifted through the Western States to the North West Territories. While employed in a lumbering job, he was in an accident and lost his left arm at the elbow. His days as a lumberjack over, he was hired as a rider by Burns when the latter was initiating his cattle business. Despite his handicap, Monaghan was a good cowman. By tucking his coiled rawhide rope under his stub arm, he could rope with the best of them. Unlike other riders, he had to swing on his horse by grasping the saddle horn with his right hand. He was one of Burns'

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<sup>72</sup>Interviews with Walter Wake's sons: Jack Wake of Calgary, August 28, 1956; Colin M. Wake of High River, August 4, 1956.



first foremen, with such responsibilities as looking after winter feed camps, watching over summer herds on the range and acting as wagon boss on roundups. Monaghan's work was usually in the area north and east of Calgary where, until the first decade of this century, the Burns herds grazed practically at will on the open range. In 1913, although not yet fifty years old, physical afflictions put Monaghan on the retirement list.<sup>73</sup>

William R. MacCombe began to ride for Burns in the 1890's but the exact date has not been established. He was a good cattleman as he had spent twenty-two years on the ranges of Texas.<sup>74</sup> Riders from Texas and other ranching states were readily hired by Canadians because of their familiarity with the problems of ranching. MacCombe became Burns' foreman in the area south of Calgary. He remained in Burns' employ until 1907 when he decided to buy cattle for William Fares of the Gordon, Ironside and Fares Company of Winnipeg, a firm with large interests in the meat packing and ranching industries.<sup>75</sup>

There remain countless men who deserve recognition for their

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<sup>73</sup>Interview Mr. E.J. "Bud" Cotton of Calgary, August 26, 1956. (Mr. Cotton was a rider for Burns from 1903 to 1913). The fact that Burns hired a man with a physical disability such as Monaghan had, may have an explanation. In an interview with a nephew of Burns, Mr. Thomas Farrell of Calgary, on July 24, 1956, the writer learned that Patrick Burns' brother, John, also lost an arm in a logging accident. Burns may have been only too well aware of the difficulties Monaghan faced in securing employment.

<sup>74</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, December 15, 1897.

<sup>75</sup>Interview Mr. John Glendenning of Nanton, October 6, 1956. (Mr. Glendenning bought cattle for Burns for several years).



part in the success of Burns' ranching activities. The ever increasing scope of his operations is a factor which cannot be ignored in tracing the economic growth of the prairies. Every district in Southern Alberta was at one time or another represented in his employment force. Some men spent their entire working lives in his service while others came and went. In many cases men found the kind of life they wanted in doing their daily routine. Others found that they were gaining an education in the ways of the West and on leaving Burns' employ went on to better things. Service with Burns was sometimes rewarding in ways not always measured in dollars and cents.

Details of Burns' personal part in the establishment and growth of his ranching interests in the 1890's are few. He was, however, the driving force which made his cattle brand, the **VL**, taken over from George Lane in 1891 or 1892, a familiar mark on the left flank of countless animals.<sup>76</sup> His personal courage and determination must have been an example for the capable men associated with him. On one occasion he was thrown from his galloping horse when it stepped in a gopher hole in the prairie. "Both his wrists were broken and he was alone. Despite the anguish and terrible pain, he caught his pony, mounted and rode eighteen miles to a doctor."<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>76</sup>P. Burns to the Brand Recorders Office: June 1, 1898; July 4, 1898. (Correspondence in the files of the Brand Recorders Office, Edmonton). Burns' brand is always referred to as the "N L" although strictly speaking, it reads "V L".

<sup>77</sup>Vancouver Daily Province, May 10, 1928.





Burns shared in the hardships of the country as extracts from a story of bygone years testify:

....It is nearly 40 years<sup>78</sup> ago that I first saw Pat Burns, when he stayed a week at my father's ranch in MacPherson's Coulee, 25 miles north of Calgary. It was 60 below, every well, stream and river was frozen to the bottom. Ranchers were melting snow for their immediate use, but the animals were perishing of thirst. On my father's ranch, however, was an everlasting spring that boiled from the earth ice cold in summer and had never been known to freeze in winter. Burns and his five cowboys were bringing several hundred head of cattle from the north, and for days they had no water. He sent word to my father he was coming. There was not a breath of air; and the sun was blinding on the glistening snow. We could hear them coming a mile away, the crunching of their feet on the frozen snow, bellowing for water. When they sensed that water was near, they broke into a stampede down the hill into the coulee, and jumped knee deep into the spring, fighting one another in their panic.

...Burns was happy, and full of wit. He said what kept his feet from freezing was the Salvation Army 'War Cry' he had in the soles of his shoes.

One of his cowboys was from Texas. He was a man who could spend six months' wages in one night in Calgary, but Pat always saw to it that he was well outfitted before he got his pay....

So after feeding and watering his cattle for a week, Burns went his way. With a smile he waved us good bye, and we watched him driving his herd up over the hill and out of sight, facing that biting cold undaunted.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>78</sup>The episode appears to have taken place during the cold winter of 1896-97.

<sup>79</sup>Mabel Grasley, "The First Time I Saw Pat Burns", The Calgary Daily Herald, September 8, 1937.



### CHAPTER III

#### THE KOOTENAY AND KLONDIKE MARKETS (1892-1898)

The editor of the Macleod Gazette once pointed out: "Cattle are bought and shipped with as little publicity as possible."<sup>1</sup> A lack of publicity makes it difficult to estimate the volume of Burns' trade in British Columbia in 1892, for newspapers are the only source of information. It is clear, however, that Burns had been encouraged by the 1891 season for his 1892 shipments appear numerous. In the latter part of February, he took a shipment of 160 head of cattle to Vancouver.<sup>2</sup> Toward the end of March he sold ninety-five cattle for shipment to Vancouver.<sup>3</sup> In April he was planning another shipment of one hundred head.<sup>4</sup> In May, George Lane drove three hundred cattle to Calgary for Burns.<sup>5</sup> In August, Burns and another man sent one car of beef cattle to Revelstoke.<sup>6</sup>

A newspaper summary discloses that in the period from January 1 to April 19, 1892, 1,368 cattle and 512,690 pounds of dressed beef were shipped from Calgary to British Columbia. It was observed that the

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<sup>1</sup>The Macleod Gazette, September 29, 1899.

<sup>2</sup>Calgary Weekly Herald and Live Stock Journal, March 2, 1892. (Hereinafter referred to as The Calgary Weekly Herald).

<sup>3</sup>The Calgary Daily Herald, March 29, 1892.

<sup>4</sup>Lethbridge News, April 20, 1892.

<sup>5</sup>The Calgary Daily Herald, May 9, 1892.

<sup>6</sup>The Calgary Herald and Alberta Live Stock Journal, August 3, 1892. (Hereinafter referred to as The Calgary Herald).



trade was only beginning. "With the growth of the coast towns, still very rapid, and the immense development of the mining towns of British Columbia, the demand for Alberta beef in that Province is certain to take on very large proportions."<sup>7</sup>

As the year 1892 drew to a close, Burns put into operation a plan which helped solve his winter marketing problems:

The advantage of cold storage warehouses has made itself apparent during the past fortnight during which the butchers have been put to a considerable trouble and expense in securing a supply of cattle. Mr. P. Burns of Calgary, however, about Christmas time killed quite a number and kept the beef in frozen condition in Calgary. This has been shipped down within the past few days to local meatmen and shows a great difference in point of quality from that of the best cattle that have been killed since the recent storms.<sup>8</sup>

In taking this step, Burns showed that he had taken a close look at marketing problems and had found a way to broaden the service he was extending to his customers.

British Columbia was entering a period of rapid development, especially in the Kootenay area. In 1887 the discovery of the Hall mines gave birth to Nelson.<sup>9</sup> For the next several years, prospectors in ever increasing numbers were scouring the entire Kootenay region. Other discoveries followed and almost overnight new mining developments and mining towns appeared. Closely tied to the mining

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<sup>7</sup>The Calgary Herald and Live Stock Journal, April 27, 1892. (Hereinafter referred to as The Calgary Herald).

<sup>8</sup>The Calgary Herald, February 20, 1893.

<sup>9</sup>F.W. Howay, British Columbia -- The Making of a Province (Toronto: Ryerson, 1928) p. 230.





developments was the growth of lumber camps and saw mills to supply the needs of industry. Improvements in transportation were required. The problem was partly solved by the construction of a number of short railway lines.

The mountainous nature of the country did not make it self-sufficient in respect to food supplies, especially meat. British Columbia ranchers could not supply the demand, and imports were required either from the north-western United States or the Canadian prairies. When areas such as the Okanagan Valley proved suitable for irrigation and the growing of fruits and vegetables, considerable land was lost for grazing purposes. The population of British Columbia rose from 98,173 in 1891 to 178,657 in 1901.<sup>10</sup> In the same period the numbers of cattle, excluding milch cows, fell from 109,415 to 100,467.<sup>11</sup>

On the prairies the problem was a different one. The output of beef was increasing with each passing year, and the problem was to find new markets for cattle. The British and eastern Canadian markets took care of some of the surplus, but wider markets were needed. In 1892, some alleged cases of pleuro-pneumonia were reported among Canadian cattle exported to Britain, and on November 21 of that year, an embargo was placed on all Canadian cattle.<sup>12</sup> Under the conditions

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<sup>10</sup>The Statistical Year-Book of Canada for 1904 (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1905) p. 84.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p.98.

<sup>12</sup>C.M. MacInnes, In the Shadow of the Rockies (London: Rivington, 1930), p. 196.



of the embargo, the cattle had to be slaughtered shortly after their arrival. The cattle had insufficient time to recover from the hardships of the long rail and ocean journey, and the average price of steers on the British market fell from fifty to thirty-five dollars.<sup>13</sup> Earlier in 1893, a "beef famine" had developed in British Columbia.<sup>14</sup> Here was the opportunity to which those in the beef trade could now turn their attention. In 1893 Burns reacted to the changing conditions, and strengthened his position in the British Columbia market.

In February, 1893, Burns travelled to the Coast "with a large shipment of cattle".<sup>15</sup> In March, he shipped three carloads, part of a lot previously purchased from the New Oxley Ranch.<sup>16</sup> Early in April, Burns sent eight cars of beef to the Coast which were in "prime condition for killing".<sup>17</sup> In the middle of April, he shipped eight carloads of steers, "part of a lot" which he had bought from the Cochrane Cattle Company.<sup>18</sup> At Calgary, toward the end of April Burns, "who had previously brought up several lots of cattle from the southern country", received a further eleven carloads of Cochrane steers which fully maintained "the reputation of Alberta for good beef".<sup>19</sup> Cochrane cattle

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<sup>13</sup>MacInnes, op. cit., p. 196.

<sup>14</sup>The Calgary Weekly Herald, February 22, 1893.

<sup>15</sup>The Calgary Herald, February 20, 1893.

<sup>16</sup>The Macleod Gazette, March 24, 1893.

<sup>17</sup>The Calgary Weekly Herald, April 5, 1893.

<sup>18</sup>The Macleod Gazette, April 14, 1893.

<sup>19</sup>The Calgary Herald, April 27, 1893.



were also shipped in May.<sup>20</sup> Early in June, and again toward the end of June, he travelled to Vancouver with "large" shipments of cattle.<sup>21</sup>

Burns' 1893 shipments bring out two points worthy of notice. First, he was making his mark as a cattle buyer in Alberta as he was able to negotiate substantial purchases from two of the major cattle ranches, the Oxley and the Cochrane. Secondly, the fact that he accompanied a number of shipments to Vancouver suggests that he personally saw that the cattle were properly cared for during the journey, and took charge of delivery arrangements at the end of the trip. Perhaps the time had come when he needed an experienced man to help him in British Columbia. In addition to his British Columbia shipments, there is evidence that he shipped three trainloads or about 1,200 head of cattle to the eastern Canadian or British market in 1893.<sup>22</sup>

Burns' solution to the management of his growing business in British Columbia was to secure a partner. A partnership arrangement was reached with Malcolm MacInnes in 1893.<sup>23</sup> Their names are linked in three news items of that year. In June, they shipped fourteen cars of cattle to British Columbia.<sup>24</sup> In October, they are mentioned

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<sup>20</sup>The Calgary Herald, May 11, 1893.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., June 3, 1893; June 26, 1893.

<sup>22</sup>The Semi-Weekly Calgary Herald and Alberta Livestock Journal, October 17, 1893. (Hereinafter referred to as The Semi-Weekly Calgary Herald).

<sup>23</sup>The spelling of "MacInnes" varies in different sources, for example, "McInnis", "McInnes", and "McInnes". As his son spells his name "MacInnes", other spellings have been changed for the sake of uniformity.

<sup>24</sup>The Edmonton Bulletin, June 19, 1893.





as the holders of a mortgage on the \$6,500 Barret Block at Nelson.<sup>25</sup> In December, their relationship was clearly stated: "The difficulties in transporting cattle from Alberta to West Kootenay are considerable. Messrs. Burns, MacInnes and Co. were lately 25 days in getting cattle from Calgary to Three Forks."<sup>26</sup> It seems that a division of responsibility was agreed upon in the conduct of the Kootenay trade; one took the West Kootenay, the other the East.<sup>27</sup>

MacInnes was a man rich in livestock experience both in British Columbia and the Territories. In 1882, he was the first to accomplish the feat of driving a band of horses from Nicola Valley, British Columbia, through to the prairies.<sup>28</sup> He settled on Fish Creek a few miles south of Calgary and engaged in the cattle business.<sup>29</sup> For a time in the 1880's, the firm of Soules and MacInnes was active in the buying and shipping of cattle.<sup>30</sup> In the severe winter of 1886-87, having profited from his experiences in British Columbia, he was one

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<sup>25</sup>The Semi-Weekly Calgary Herald, October 13, 1893.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., December 29, 1893.

<sup>27</sup>Opinion expressed by Malcolm MacInnes' son, Professor C.M. MacInnes of the University of Bristol, England, in a letter dated February 15, 1957.

<sup>28</sup>The Calgary Herald, November 18, 1933.

<sup>29</sup>L.V. Kelly, The Range Men (Toronto: Briggs, 1913), p. 156.

<sup>30</sup>Fred W. Ings, "Tales of the Midway Ranch", Canadian Cattlemen (Vol. 8, No. 1, June 1945), p. 29.



of the few men who put up nay to feed his cattle.<sup>31</sup> The preceding mild winters had lured others into the belief that cattle could safely winter on the range.

One reason for the partnership was the fact that Burns had decided to enter the retail trade in British Columbia. He entered "the butcher business in Nelson, B.C. as early as 1893, conducting business in Kaslo, Sandon and Three Forks that year, and in Rossland and the Boundary country a few years later."<sup>32</sup>

Burns probably felt that the establishment of retail outlets gave his business greater stability by supplying assured markets. He continued to secure contracts such as those on railway construction but they were no longer the backbone of his business. With a ranch at Olds, and an abattoir at Calgary, the third cornerstone of his business was laid with the acquisition of retail markets. A portion of his business was now under his complete control. Profits that ordinarily would go to others could now be kept within his own business structure. The new arrangement marked an important stage in the development of a great business empire. It was the pattern Burns followed with increasing success.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>MacInnes, op. cit., p. 218

<sup>32</sup>The Morning Albertan, February 28, 1913.

<sup>33</sup>It should be mentioned that Burns operated slaughter houses at many British Columbia centres for it was necessary to have facilities to slaughter cattle bought locally or shipped in from distant points.



At this stage in his business in the Kootenays, Burns brought into his service a young man, who, in the years that followed, played an important role in his organization. William John "Blake" Wilson was born in Wellington County, Ontario.<sup>34</sup> As a youth he had experience in farm work, and in 1890 he came to British Columbia.<sup>35</sup> Here he was occupied as a stage driver between Rossland, B.C. and Northport, Washington.<sup>36</sup> Blake Wilson's brother, Joe, was a partner with Billy Perdue in the firm of Wilson and Perdue.<sup>37</sup> The company operated a pack train in the Slocan district<sup>38</sup> and freighted supplies on the local waterways.<sup>39</sup> In 1891, it opened the first butcher shop in Nelson.<sup>40</sup> When Joe lost his life in an accident, his brother Blake took his place with Perdue.<sup>41</sup> Blake got a contract<sup>42</sup> for provisioning the

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<sup>34</sup>B.M. Greene (editor), Who's Who and Why (Toronto: International Press, 1921), p. 372.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>Information obtained from typewritten notes compiled by Mr. John J. Tighe of Calgary, a long-time employee of Burns. p. 10 of notes. (Hereinafter referred to as "Tighe's Notes").

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>Letter received by Mr. Tighe from R.D. Kerr of Grand Forks, B.C., March 1, 1944.

<sup>39</sup>Tighe's Notes, p. 10.

<sup>40</sup>Fred J. Smyth, Tales of the Kootenays (Cranbrook: The Courier, 1938), p. 33.

<sup>41</sup>Tighe's Notes, p. 10.

<sup>42</sup>Greene, op. cit., p. 372.





work-gangs on the first railway in the Kootenays, the twenty-eight mile Columbia and Kootenay Railroad which connected Nelson on the west arm of Kootenay Lake with Robson on the Columbia River, completed in 1892.<sup>43</sup>

Burns joined forces with Wilson and Perdue and formed the firm of Burns, Wilson and Perdue.<sup>44</sup> Later, Perdue withdrew and Blake Wilson remained as manager. For a time the firm operated under the name Burns, Wilson & Co.<sup>45</sup> When a serious fire wiped out the settlement of Three Forks in 1894, a newspaper listed among the losses: "Burns, Wilson & Co., butchers, \$3,000."<sup>46</sup> As manager of a portion of Burns' Kootenay interests, Blake Wilson must have proved his worth. A biographical source states:

In 1903 he became associated with Mr. Pat Burns as his partner and since has figured on every railway contract in Canada and within a reasonable distance of the International Boundary Line, having had large contracts in Idaho, Montana and Oregon.<sup>47</sup>

Burns regarded Blake Wilson as the closest of friends and as his right hand man in British Columbia. The entry of Wilson into

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<sup>43</sup>F.W. Howay and E.O.S. Scholefield, British Columbia From the Earliest Times to the Present (4 vols.; Vancouver: S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1914), Vol. 2, p. 485.

<sup>44</sup>Tighe's Notes, p. 10.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>The Lethbridge News, August 1, 1894.

<sup>47</sup>Greene, op. cit., p. 372



partnership with Burns may have been a result of Burns' purchase of Malcolm MacInnes' interests in 1901.<sup>48</sup> C.J. Duggan's position as a partner underwent some change about the turn of the century. It is believed that Duggan felt that he could not support Burns' policy of major expansion in the Vancouver area.<sup>49</sup> He remained, however, as manager of the ranching end of the business. In later years, he held a small number of shares in the Burns firm.<sup>50</sup> Blake Wilson became the third largest shareholder in the firm, eventually having about a 5% interest.<sup>51</sup>

Unknown to the public at large, William Mackenzie of the Canadian Northern Railway, was a factor in the growth of Burns' business.

While Mackenzie, with 'Dan' Mann, was laying rails out into the wilderness, he had done business with his early school-fellow and had a high opinion of his qualities. He put Burns in the way of making quick money in enterprises in South America. He also advanced him some thousands of dollars for the purpose of his developing cattle business.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>Details of this transaction will be supplied later. See p. 95.

<sup>49</sup>Interview Mr. Frank Collicut of Calgary, September 1, 1955. (Mr. Collicut bought cattle for Burns for many years).

<sup>50</sup>Information in the files of the Companies Branch, Edmonton. (A 3.12% interest in 1919).

<sup>51</sup>Ibid. (A 5.005% interest in 1919).

<sup>52</sup>Francis Mollison Black, "Patrick Burns as I Knew Him". (A clipping in the Calgary Public Library dated March 27, 1937. Unable to identify source). Black was treasurer of Burns' Kootenay business from 1901 to 1909. From 1909 to 1917 he served as treasurer of the entire business. In the 1920's he served a term as Provincial Treasurer of Manitoba.



At a later date Mackenzie's loans precipitated a grave problem for Burns.<sup>53</sup>

One of the difficulties Burns faced in the development of his Kootenay meat trade was the matter of transportation. For years access to the Kootenays by Canadian routes was slow and costly. Cattle purchased in British Columbia could often be trailed to market, but as the bulk of the cattle came from the prairies, rail and water routes were used. In 1892, a cattle shipment from Calgary had a circuitous route to follow. First, the animals would go by the Canadian Pacific main line to Revelstoke, a point over two hundred miles north of the mining centres of the Nelson district. At Revelstoke, the cattle were loaded on a barge towed by a sternwheeler and taken southward on the Columbia River through Upper and Lower Arrow Lakes to Robson. At Robson, the cattle were unloaded again, and driven to the mining centres or perhaps taken a further twenty-eight miles over the newly completed Columbia and Kootenay Railroad to Nelson.<sup>54</sup>

Dependence on the Columbia water route from Revelstoke was somewhat relieved by further railway construction. In 1893, the Nakusp and Slocan railway was commenced. It began at Nakusp on the east shore of Upper Arrow Lake and extended south-easterly to serve the Slocan Lake mining area. In 1894, this line was opened as far as

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<sup>53</sup>The matter will be fully discussed at a more appropriate point.

<sup>54</sup>Howay and Scholefield, op. cit., Volume 2, pp. 485-86.





Three Forks, a distance of thirty-three miles. In 1895, the line was extended to Sandon, four miles beyond. In 1896, after a period of intermittent construction, the most northerly part of the Columbia steamer service was replaced by the construction of a twenty-eight mile branch line from Revelstoke to Arrowhead on Upper Arrow Lake. Navigation on this part of the Columbia River was sometimes hindered by low water or ice conditions. Numerous other short lines were built in the Kootenays during the 1890's but the biggest improvement as far as prairie shippers were concerned was the completion of the Crow's Nest Pass Line connecting Lethbridge, Alberta, to the southern end of Kootenay Lake, and its extension to Nelson in 1900.<sup>55</sup>

Early in 1897, Burns expressed his pleasure that the construction of the Crow's Nest line would soon begin. He observed that it took from two to three days to ship cattle from Calgary to the Nelson area via Revelstoke. Some consignments had to be transshipped two or three times. He mentioned that dressed meats originating from centres such as Winnipeg were sent over American lines to Nelson without transshipments.<sup>56</sup>

The United States was geographically in the best position to furnish supplies to the Kootenay markets. A number of trails and waterways in the border region led to the American railway systems. In 1895, the Nelson and Fort Sheppard Railway was completed connecting

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<sup>55</sup>Howay and Scholefield, *op. cit.*, Volume 2, pp. 465-67.

<sup>56</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, January 20, 1897.



Nelson to the Great Northern system.<sup>57</sup> In 1895, the thirty-two mile Kaslo and Slocan line was under construction on the west side of Kootenay Lake to draw trade to the United States by way of the lake.<sup>58</sup> In 1897, the Red Mountain Railway was built to connect Rossland with Northport.<sup>59</sup>

Livestock and foodstuffs from American sources reached the British Columbia markets,<sup>60</sup> but Canadians had an advantage in the case of cattle. In 1891,<sup>61</sup> a three month quarantine was placed on American cattle, and it was not withdrawn until 1897.<sup>62</sup> The cost of holding cattle at border points for three months raised the price of American beef to a point where Canadian beef had a market advantage. While the quarantine was in effect, Burns became so firmly entrenched that its removal did not materially harm the trade despite his fears that its removal would be the "worst blow that has ever been struck at Alberta."<sup>63</sup> The retention of the Kootenay market for Canadian ranchers can be appreciated, as Spokane was the natural metropolis of the Kootenay area and was hailed as the capital of the "Inland Empire".

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<sup>57</sup>William J. Wilgus, The Railway Interrelations of the United States and Canada (Toronto: Ryerson, 1937), p. 131.

<sup>58</sup>The Edmonton Bulletin, June 6, 1895.

<sup>59</sup>Howay and Scholefield, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 485.

<sup>60</sup>The Edmonton Bulletin, March 29, 1893; December 27, 1894; June 20, 1895; Calgary Daily Herald, March 22, 1897.

<sup>61</sup>The Edmonton Bulletin, September 22, 1892.

<sup>62</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, January 30, 1897.

<sup>63</sup>The Macleod Gazette, January 29, 1897.



Burns' Kootenay trade was growing steadily. In 1895, D.D. Mann, the railroad builder, although not mentioning Burns by name, stated: "At present one butcher alone is buying fifty head of cattle per week on the ranches about Calgary and selling them in the Kootenay. All this would be trebled if the road were direct ...."<sup>64</sup>

In 1896, Burns' facilities in Calgary must have been inadequate for his market needs. He arranged a contract with Sloan and Company of Calgary to slaughter 300 head of cattle to be put in cold storage for shipment to Nelson and other mining centres.<sup>65</sup> The editor of the Macleod Gazette observed that Burns had "practically all" the butchering business in the West Kootenay country. He estimated that the West Kootenay district, including Rossland and Slocan, had absorbed 5,000 cattle during the year.<sup>66</sup> Undoubtedly the West Kootenay area formed the greater part of Burns' market. If the volume of his trade in the rest of British Columbia and his shipments elsewhere in Canada and to Britain were known, the full extent of his trade would indeed assume major proportions.

In 1896, Burns' trade called for a greater production of hogs in Alberta. A Calgary news item stated that he was "up north" offering \$5.00 a hundred pounds for "all the hogs he can get."<sup>67</sup> At the time

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<sup>64</sup>The Macleod Gazette, November 8, 1895. (The writer feels that Mann's figure is clearly in line with the evidence of Burns' trade in the succeeding years).

<sup>65</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, December 15, 1896.

<sup>66</sup>The Macleod Gazette, January 22, 1897.

<sup>67</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, December 7, 1896.





he imported most of his monthly requirements of 700 hogs and 1,500 sheep from the United States.<sup>68</sup> Burns would have preferred to obtain his hogs in Alberta, but the farmers were able to supply a "mere fraction of the demand."<sup>69</sup> The publicity which was given from time to time about Burns' need for hogs undoubtedly stimulated production.

Burns must have found the demands of the British Columbia markets very satisfying in 1897.

Mr. P. Burns, who does pretty nearly the whole of the beef trade of the West Kootenai, B.C., was in town today. He has been visiting the different sections of Southern Alberta in the interests of his business. Mr. Burns' business in British Columbia has been developing rapidly. He is now killing 800 head of beef cattle in a month, and is paying out \$55,000 per month for beef, hogs and sheep. This will give some idea of the value of this trade alone to the people of Alberta when direct communication via the Crow's Nest Pass is established. Mr. Burns will take during the coming season all the beef cattle which Southern Alberta can supply, and will buy everything. He has already bought all the Willow Creek cattle. The prices he is giving are as follows: All 4-yr. old steers, not picked, \$40; picked 3-yr. old steers, \$40; All dry cows, \$27; Spayed cows, \$32.50; Stags, \$20. First delivery will be made after the 1st Nov. Mr. Burns will feed quite a number of cattle on the Little Bow this summer.<sup>70</sup>

Burns' sweeping offer to buy all the cattle available in Southern Alberta had repercussions when shortly afterwards railway freight rates were reduced by an average of three dollars per head. The Calgary Daily Herald alleged that Burns was the one who would

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<sup>68</sup> Calgary Daily Herald, January 14, 1897.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> The Macleod Gazette, March 26, 1897.



benefit as he had been purchasing cattle under contracted prices. There was an implication that Burns knew that the freight rate was coming. "Isn't it about time for some people to kick themselves?" asked the Herald, claiming that in four or five months time top steers would bring \$45 and \$50. The Macleod Gazette hastened to Burns' defence saying, "Fancy our friend Stimson, [manager of the big Bar U Ranch] for example, getting himself into the shape necessary to kick himself!" The Gazette claimed that "no sound business man would refuse a present good thing for a future possibility, and an improbable possibility at that." The Gazette pointed out that Burns was prepared to pay \$40 for every four-year-old steer not the "picked steers of that age only".<sup>71</sup>

The Calgary paper's criticisms of Burns' transactions were either too late or were given little attention. By early April of 1897 he had bought five thousand cattle for future delivery.<sup>72</sup> In the following month the Stewart Ranch Company sold its entire herd of approximately two thousand cattle to Burns.<sup>73</sup> Aside from the attitude taken by the Herald, Burns' offer is striking evidence of the growth of his business and of his impact on the cattle trade in Alberta. Burns'

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<sup>71</sup>The Macleod Gazette, April 2, 1897. (A gap in the microfilm records of the Daily Herald explains why no footnotes can be used for that paper's comments).

<sup>72</sup>The Alberta Tribune, April 3, 1897. (A Calgary paper).

<sup>73</sup>The Macleod Gazette, May 28, 1897.



position in the sheep trade also held great potential for Western Canadian producers. In 1897 his requirements were 1500 head per month, most of which he obtained in the United States.<sup>74</sup> No doubt he would have preferred to buy sheep closer at hand. Later in the year he sent a consignment of 1500 sheep from Swift Current to the Kootenays.<sup>75</sup>

In February, 1897, Pat Burns had sixteen stores in the Kootenay country.<sup>76</sup> Indeed, Burns may have been hard pressed to keep up with market demands. A March news item stated: "The recent development of mining in Southern British Columbia is one of the phenomenal features of the history of this country."<sup>77</sup> Later in the same month a paper reported: "The market in Kootenay continues to increase at a rate which is astonishing. Mr. P. Burns states that his turnover in Rossland is \$23,000 a month, in Sandon \$15,000 a month, and in other towns in proportion."<sup>78</sup> Aside from what the Kootenay boom meant to Burns' personal fortunes, one must acknowledge that he served an important role in supplying the region with meat.

On July 14, 1897, the first sod of the "Crow's Nest Pass" rail-

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<sup>74</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, January 14, 1897.

<sup>75</sup>The Alberta Tribune, December 18, 1897.

<sup>76</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, February 8, 1897.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., March 22, 1897.

<sup>78</sup>Calgary Weekly Herald, March 25, 1897. (The word "Calgary" was dropped from the paper's title).





way was turned at Lethbridge.<sup>79</sup> The firm of Mackenzie and Mann had the construction contract.

The building of the road had a far reaching effect on business. Some 5,000 men on construction had to be supplied with food ... The contract for supplying the meat alone was a big item. Malcolm MacInnes established meat markets and distributing points at Fernie, Cranbrook and Moyie, and in this he was backed by P. Burns & Co. Their shops handled from 300 to 400 cattle a month. They were brought in mostly from the ranges in Alberta, and created a great market for prairie stock raisers and ranchers.<sup>80</sup>

The construction of the railway may have meant more to Burns than the immediate profits of the beef contract. The new line was welcome as it provided a shorter and more direct route from the prairies to the Kootenay area of British Columbia. The existing Canadian route which led south from Revelstoke was circuitous and involved some long slow water travel. The new line appears to have opened for freight and passenger traffic in January of 1899.<sup>81</sup> Later that year substantial freight reductions were made on livestock travelling over the new route.<sup>82</sup>

The demands of business must have given Pat Burns hectic days in 1897. In June, heavy rains washed out bridges and railway track between Calgary and Banff. When he found himself stranded in Banff, he and A.E. Cross of the Calgary Brewing and Malting Co. procured horses

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<sup>79</sup>The Alberta Tribune, June 12, 1897.

<sup>80</sup>Smyth, op. cit., p. 76.

<sup>81</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, January 14, 1899. (The last spike on this line was driven on October 6, 1898. See the Macleod Gazette, October 14, 1898).

<sup>82</sup>Ibid., March 14, 1899.



and rode about eighty miles to Calgary. In some cases they had to swim their horses through swollen creeks which barred the way.<sup>83</sup>

In 1897, the acumen of Patrick Burns was to initiate a venture which demonstrates the tasks the rangers of Western Canada were willing to tackle. The story begins with the discovery of Klondike gold on August 17, 1896.<sup>84</sup> Word of the strike spread, and men of the Yukon began to flock to newly born Dawson City to reap their fortunes. Food became scarce that winter, and by the time the spring break-up permitted the resumption of river traffic, the cost of food supplies had reached fantastic proportions. News of the strike did not receive much publicity in the outside world until a steamer brought some gold-laden sourdoughs back from the isolation of the north to San Francisco on July 17, 1897.<sup>85</sup> The remaining months of 1897 saw the beginning of a rush of men to the Yukon, a rush which reached its climax in 1898. To Pat Burns the evidence that thousands of men were determined to go to the Yukon, meant one thing -- beef!

Burns wasted no time swinging into action that summer of 1897. His experience in the Kootenay mining boom told him what to do. Before the year was out he had succeeded in getting beef to the sourdoughs of Dawson City. On December 27, 1897, a newspaper reported:

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<sup>83</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, June 21, 1897.

<sup>84</sup>Pierre Berton, The Golden Trail (Toronto: Macmillan, 1954), p. 16.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., p. 51.



Beef at Dawson  
Shipment of Cattle from Calgary to Klondyke

Pat Burns, of Nelson, received word last week that 'Billy' Perdue had reached Dawson City with his bunch of cattle in good shape. It will be remembered that when the Klondyke boom started last July, Mr. Burns procured 85 head of prime Albertan beef cattle which were shipped from Calgary in charge of Perdue on August 4th. They arrived at Skagway on August 28th and the next day the journey over the White Pass was begun. Dawson was reached on November 4th, the voyage from Calgary occupying exactly three months. The necessary outfit was packed on the backs of the animals which were gentle. Nothing definite was heard until on their arrival at Dawson Mr. Perdue communicated at once with Mr. Burns. It is said that the beef dressed 800 lbs. and was sold at \$1 per lb. which would mean a handsome profit for Messrs. Burns and Perdue.<sup>86</sup>

On January 15, 1898, the Alberta Tribune stated:

Regarding the loss of P. Burns' cattle on the way to Dawson, it is reported that the current was so rapid it was deemed advisable to tie quarters of beef to the rafts. In spite of this, however, the rafts got into the wrong part of the river and were dashed to pieces.

Finally, on January 29, 1898, the Alberta Tribune reported:

Pat Burns' bunch of cattle has arrived safely at Dawson City, with merely nominal loss notwithstanding reports to the contrary.

The report of the Auditor General for the year ending June 30, 1898, has an item under government expenses in the Yukon for a payment of \$2,250.00 to one W. Perdue for 1,500 pounds of beef at \$1.50 a pound.<sup>87</sup> The portion bought by the government was probably purchased to augment Mounted Police supplies. The balance of the meat must have

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<sup>86</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, December 27, 1897, p. 2, Col. 3. (It is assumed that "Billy" Perdue was the same man who was briefly a partner in the firm of Burns, Wilson and Perdue in the Kootenays in the early 1890's).

<sup>87</sup>Canada, Sessional Papers, Session 1899, Volume 1, Part 2, Sessional Paper 1, Part M (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1899), p. 38.





been disposed of at high prices to other purchasers.

The story of how the first Burns cattle were taken to the Klondike might be more fully embellished but the accounts which have been written have discrepancies which are difficult to reconcile. To substantiate the claim that the first delivery of Burns cattle to the Klondike took place in 1897 seems important. On May 19, 1898, the Calgary Weekly Herald reprinted a letter written by Commissioner Herchmer of the Mounted Police to the Western Stock Growers' Association. Herchmer was informing members of the association of his views on how best to get cattle to the Klondike. In his letter, Herchmer said, "Fearon, of Maple Creek; and Burns of Kootenai took cattle in last year and Oregon and Washington supplied a number."

Americans made known their intention of taking cattle to the Yukon in 1897 but it is difficult to determine how many carried their plans to fulfillment. Aside from any American who may have been successful, it seems that at least three Canadians achieved their purpose in 1897. In addition to Burns and Fearon, J.K. Elkjar of Winnipeg took in seventeen cattle and some horses.<sup>88</sup> Research by the writer does not permit a clear cut answer as to which of these Canadians should be credited with the pioneer venture.

In the spring of 1898, Patrick Burns put Billy Henry and a crew of men in charge of a second shipment to the Yukon. Toward the middle of June, 180 beef cattle were gathered together at High River, Alberta,

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<sup>88</sup> Calgary Daily Herald, January 10, 1898.



and shipped by rail to Vancouver where they were transferred to a scow and pulled by a tug boat to Pyramia Harbour, Alaska. The six hundred mile trip to Dawson City was begun by using the Dalton Trail to pass over the Chilkat Pass into the Yukon. After a three month drive through wilderness country, the juncture of the Yukon and Pelly Rivers was reached. Here it was found advisable to butcher the cattle and load their carcasses on rafts and drift down the Yukon River the remaining 150 miles to Dawson City. The trip was completed none too soon for the river was starting to freeze over in the cold October weather.<sup>89</sup>

In Dawson City the meat was readily marketed, although the peak prices of the previous winter had now passed as other consignments of beef, pork, and mutton were reaching the Klondike by various routes. Seventy-five thousand pounds of the Burns shipment were taken by the Mounted Police at seventy-five cents a pound. The remaining beef was taken by hotels and restaurants for one dollar a pound. The hides, sold for dog food, were not so remunerative, bringing about fifty cents a pound.

Billy Henry may have thought a quiet winter on the prairies was in store for him on his return but Pat Burns had other ideas. He had heard of a new gold strike at Atlin in the north-western corner of British Columbia and Billy was to take cattle and supplies there. Twenty huge steers and seventy-five thousand pounds of freight were loaded at Skagway, Alaska. Fourteen single horse sleighs were to be

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<sup>89</sup>Interview Mr. Wm. Henry of High River, Alberta, September 2, 1955.



used to move the supplies to Atlin. In February, 1899, the party left Skagway. Among the men on this trip was Dominic Burns, a younger brother of Pat's. Two weeks later they had succeeded in moving the cattle and supplies to the summit of White Pass, a distance of ten miles. From there they followed an easier trail to the shores of Lake Bennett, a distance of thirty miles. At Lake Bennett the party had to switch off in a south-easterly direction to reach Atlin. In this stretch they had to break trail for the cattle through deep snow and brave temperatures which sometimes reached sixty below zero. Sometime in March, about a month after leaving Lake Bennett, the party reached Atlin.<sup>90</sup>

The cattle were slaughtered and a butcher shop and store opened under the name of Pat Burns. Prices were rewarding with poor cuts of beef bringing one dollar a pound. Atlin was short of all kind of commodities so, while a butcher and accountant remained there, the others returned with the sleighs to Skagway to bring in more supplies. Billy Henry returned to Calgary to get twenty more cattle while Dominic Burns remained to look after the transport of supplies from Skagway to Atlin.<sup>91</sup>

Mr. Henry's second trip with cattle to Atlin, made in April and May, proved very difficult but despite the problems the animals reached their destination. Billy decided that he had had enough cattle

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<sup>90</sup> Interview Mr. Wm. Henry of High River, Alberta, September 2, 1955.

<sup>91</sup> Interview Mr. Wm. Henry of High River, Alberta, September 2, 1955.





experiences in the North. Pat Burns tried to talk him into continuing with the goldfield trade when he returned to Calgary, but with no success. Billy returned to the High River country of Alberta where, in conjunction with other activities, he bought beef for Burns until about 1909.<sup>92</sup>

The construction of the White Pass Railway from Skagway to Whitehorse between 1898 and 1900 helped solve the problem of year round access to the Yukon, but there were many centres which could not be reached except by river or trail. In fact, the cattlemen preferred the more economical method of driving cattle to markets if time and conditions permitted. According to one source of information, the Klondiker's meat had its variations.

Some of that beef came off the Queen Charlotte Islands on which cattle had been running wild for a number of years. The Hudson's Bay Co. had placed about 100 cattle on the island in 1892 or previously, intending to supply the northern posts with beef. Likewise the Indian Department introduced cattle but the island did not lend itself to herding and the cattle went wild and were more or less abandoned. Gordon, Ironside and Fares and Pat Burns were among those who took cattle off the island in '98 for the northern coastal trade.<sup>93</sup>

Competition for the lucrative Yukon trade must surely have been keen. The advent of Canadians in the field was probably welcomed by many. In 1897, a member of the Mounted Police observed: "The only trading companies in the country are the North American Trading and

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<sup>92</sup>Interview Mr. Wm. Henry of High River, Alberta, September 2, 1955.

<sup>93</sup>"Prairie Cattle to the Klondyke in the '90's", Canadian Cattlemen (Vol. 2, No. 1, June, 1939), p. 220.



Navigation Co., and the Alaska Commercial Co., both Yankee concerns.

They have a practical monopoly on the trade and make their own prices."<sup>94</sup>

Both Pat Burns and his brother Dominic remained active in the northern trade after the boom days of the gold rush. Dominic spent many years in the Yukon establishing meat interests of his own and managing those developed by his brother. Newspaper reports show that their business was an extensive one.<sup>95</sup> Butcher shops in such places as Atlin, Whitehorse and Dawson handled the distribution of the meat.<sup>96</sup> In 1903, it was stated that the Klondike meat business was "pretty well controlled by P. Burns & company and the Pacific Cold Storage company."<sup>97</sup> In 1904, Burns signed a \$250,000 contract to supply the Pacific Cold Storage Co. of Tacoma with thirty-five hundred steers -- big 1,450 pound animals, the pick of the Burns ranches.<sup>98</sup> It is thought that in connection with the contract it was agreed that Burns would stay out of the meat trade in Dawson.<sup>99</sup> Yearly contracts between the two firms continued for some years.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>94</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, July 28, 1897.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid., September 11, 1899; April 23, 1901; June 30, 1902; February 27, 1903; July 4, 1903; March 8, 1904; The Macleod Gazette, July 13, 1900.

<sup>96</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, February 27, 1903.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid., July 4, 1903.

<sup>98</sup>The Macleod Gazette, April 29, 1904.

<sup>99</sup>Interview Mr. Chris Bartsch of Calgary, July 7, 1956. (Mr. Bartsch was employed by the Pacific Cold Storage Co. in these years).

<sup>100</sup>Ibid.



Dominic Burns was manager of his brother's interests in the Yukon for several years. Prior to World War I his own meat interests passed to Patrick. Dominic returned to Vancouver, and in 1912 or 1913 constructed the large marble faced Vancouver Block on Granville Street. Thereafter he concentrated his energies on real estate interests at the Coast.<sup>101</sup>

Much more space could be devoted to Patrick Burns' ventures in the North, but to do so would tend to put an improper emphasis on his activities there. In view of the fact that the population of the Yukon declined from 27,219 in 1901 to 8,512 in 1911,<sup>102</sup> it is obvious that the new market for meat did not develop in the way that was anticipated during the gold rush days. It is true, however, that at the turn of the century, the Yukon trade brought Burns considerable wealth which he put to use in expanding his business elsewhere. The Yukon story is particularly important in that it is a splendid example of the initiative with which Patrick Burns pursued an opportunity.

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<sup>101</sup>Correspondence with Mr. R.J. Burns of Calgary.

<sup>102</sup>The Canada Year Book 1911 (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1912), p. 2.





## CHAPTER IV

### MEAT PACKER AND CATTLE KING (1898-1907)

The Kootenay and Klondike mining booms were important stimulants in the creation of wider markets for the ranches. In addition, the prairies and British Columbia as a whole were entering a period of rapid increase in population due to the ever increasing influx of settlers. On the prairies, people who turned to farming had to stock their farms with cattle, and the ranchers were their source of supply. While the new settlers were building up their own bunches of cattle, they remained to a degree dependent on the butcher shops for meat. Even when they were in a position to do their own butchering, the difficulty of handling a large amount of fresh meat in the summer months was a problem which was often solved by a trip to the village butcher shop. In time, the homesteaders upset the existing pattern of ranching but their presence never meant a lessening in the need for meat products.

The year 1898 saw the tempo of Burns' business increasing. It was a time when the supply of beef was hardly equal to the demand created by the rapid increase in population in the Kootenay and the Klondike.<sup>1</sup> The population of West Kootenay was now estimated to be twenty thousand and East Kootenay was "growing rapidly."<sup>2</sup> Construc-

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<sup>1</sup>The Alberta Tribune, January 1, 1898.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., February 17, 1898.



tion on the Crow's Nest railroad was reported as employing six thousand or seven thousand men,<sup>3</sup> an indication of the value of the beef contract held by Burns and Malcolm MacInnes. In the spring of 1898, when the Western Stock Growers' Association discussed the shortcomings of the brand inspection system, Burns added his own complaint. He said that he was continually shipping cattle from various centres and that he "could not wait 24 hours or even four hours for an inspector to come by, as it was necessary to catch certain trains which sometimes ran only twice a week."<sup>4</sup>

In 1898, he strengthened his hold in the British Columbia market by buying out the firm of Kerr and Flood.<sup>5</sup> J.H. Flood and R.D. Kerr operated in the Boundary district with butcher shops at Midway, Greenwood, Grand Forks, Phoenix and Cascade.<sup>6</sup> In the same year, Burns opened his first retail outlet in Vancouver.<sup>7</sup> In April, 1899, it was reported that he had meat markets at Nelson, Trail, Ymir, Kaslo, Ainsworth, Rossland, Sandon, New Denver, Silverton, Slocan City, Fisher, Kuskanook, Brodigan, Cascade, Grand Forks, Greenwood, and Midway in British Columbia, and at Calgary in Alberta.<sup>8</sup> In this list of eighteen

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<sup>3</sup>Calgary Weekly Herald, February 17, 1898.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., April 21, 1898.

<sup>5</sup>The Macleod Gazette, October 16, 1903.

<sup>6</sup>A letter written by R.D. Kerr in the possession of J.J. Tighe of Calgary.

<sup>7</sup>Calgary Morning Albertan, February 28, 1913.

<sup>8</sup>Victoria Colonist, April 5, 1899.



markets, the centres which have not been identified by name in earlier reports are Trail, Ymir, Ainsworth, New Denver, Silverton, Slocan City, Kuskanook, Fisher, Brodigan, and Calgary. The list of outlets is obviously unsatisfactory for the year 1899. Burns may still have operated a store at Three Forks<sup>9</sup> and the recently acquired outlets at Vancouver and Phoenix are not mentioned. Burns had an interest in Malcolm MacInnes's markets at Fernie, Cranbrook, and Moyie,<sup>10</sup> and he operated stores at Atlin, Whitehorse, and Dawson.<sup>11</sup> In the summer of 1899, he strengthened his position in Calgary and Vancouver by purchasing the "beef business" of W.A. McIntosh.<sup>12</sup> The McIntosh business at Vancouver may have consisted of an abattoir and retail business.<sup>13</sup> The names of the places where Burns operated markets bear out the fact that he concentrated on the establishment of outlets in the mining communities, particularly those of the Kootenay district of British Columbia. The rapid expansion of his retail business from a reported sixteen stores in early 1897<sup>14</sup> to nearly thirty stores in 1899 had an important bearing on Burns' plans for the future.

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<sup>9</sup>The Morning Albertan, February 28, 1913.

<sup>10</sup>Fred J. Smyth, Tales of the Kootenays (Cranbrook: The Courier, 1938), p. 33.

<sup>11</sup>See Chapter III, p. 79.

<sup>12</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, July 3, 1899.

<sup>13</sup>Information in a prospectus of P. Burns & Co. Ltd., which was to be issued in 1923. The prospectus is in the files of the Companies Branch, Edmonton.

<sup>14</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, February 8, 1897.





For some years, Nelson, British Columbia, was the administrative centre of Burns' operations. Between 1896 and 1899, he was consistently referred to as "of Nelson", the Calgary Daily Herald alone having eighteen such references. At Nelson, Burns was in the centre of the Kootenay area, a good location from which to establish and administer retail stores in the mining towns. By 1899, however, changing conditions led Burns to reassess his position. He was firmly entrenched in the Kootenays and transportation facilities to and in British Columbia had improved. Greater attention to the handling of dressed meats rather than the shipment of live cattle was now possible. The use of cold storage plants and refrigerator cars meant that his business could be organized closer to the chief source of supply.

In consideration of these factors, Calgary, admirably located in the prairie ranching country, was a natural place to expand abattoir and cold storage facilities. From Calgary dressed meats could be shipped to other centres where cold storage plants would hold the produce for distribution to local markets. In 1897, one Calgary paper stated, "The establishment of an abattoir and cold storage premise is now the question of the hour...."<sup>15</sup> Another Calgary paper said, "Isn't it time Calgary was thinking about beef packing houses?"<sup>16</sup>

In their arguments for a packing house industry in Calgary, the newspapers emphasized that the markets for packing house products

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<sup>15</sup>The Alberta Tribune, February 27, 1897.

<sup>16</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, June 21, 1897.



were ample but they did not underscore the fact that the person or firm that controlled an extensive distribution system was in the best position to act. With his network of retail markets, Burns had assured markets in addition to an overall favourable market situation. In such circumstances it is easier to understand why Burns was the first to undertake the establishment of a packing house in Alberta rather than other local, Eastern Canadian, or American firms.

His course of action determined, Patrick Burns made the year 1899 one of outstanding achievement. Early in March it was announced that "the chief officers of P. Burns & Co. will shortly be removed from Nelson to Calgary, with W.H. Grant as Accountant in charge."<sup>17</sup> Soon after the big announcement was made.

For some time past it has been rumored that Messrs. P. Burns & company intended erecting a large cold storage and slaughter house at Calgary during the coming season. We are pleased to learn from Mr. Burns, who has just returned from Toronto and Montreal and the report is a correct one [sic]. The building now occupied by this company is much too small to accommodate the business, and it is Mr. Burns' intention to erect a building capable of holding a large stock of all kinds of dressed meats, which will be shipped in refrigerator cars to cold storages now being erected at different points in the Kootenay and British Columbia.... The buildings will be of the latest and most approved plan.... Mr. Burns while east visited the larger packing houses and examined the different methods of operating them.<sup>18</sup>

To further his plans in Calgary, Burns needed a larger site

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<sup>17</sup>The Alberta Tribune, March 11, 1899.

<sup>18</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, March 14, 1899.

<sup>19</sup>The Albertan, December 1, 1937, p. 11.



on the railway to construct the new buildings. On June 21, 1899,<sup>19</sup> he added to his existing site and facilities by purchasing the adjacent abattoir buildings and ten acre grounds of one of his competitors, the Canadian Land and Ranche Company.<sup>20</sup> The immediate plant site now consisted of fifteen acres and to the existing buildings Burns added a structure three hundred by fifty feet and a power house fifty by sixty feet.<sup>21</sup> Offices, sheep pens, and pens for two thousand hogs were also built.<sup>22</sup> Beef cattle awaiting slaughter were pastured on 1400 acres of land adjacent to the plant site.<sup>23</sup> Cattle could be processed in the abattoir at the rate of 150 animals per day<sup>24</sup> and the new cold storage warehouse had accommodation for 4,000 carcasses.<sup>25</sup>

Details carried by a Calgary newspaper about Burns' growing trade in hogs and sheep follow:

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<sup>19</sup>The Albertan, December 1, 1937, p. 11.

<sup>20</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, November 22, 1899. (The Canadian Land and Ranche Company was the successor to the Canadian Agricultural, Coal and Colonization Company, an enterprise launched by Sir John P. Lister-Kaye of England. The latter firm, popularly known as the Canadian Agricultural Company completed the premises in 1892 and operated under the name of the North-West Trading Company. See: Calgary Daily Herald, November 21, 1891; The Gleichen Call, August 20, 1908).

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., November 22, 1899.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., November 22, 1899.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., October 3, 1899.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., November 22, 1899. (A figure quoted in the October 3, 1899 issue of the paper is judged erroneous).

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., October 3, 1899.





In addition to beef products Mr. Burns is providing facilities for handling a large output of pork and mutton. Although this business is now in its infancy it is capable of enormous expansion and there is practically no limit to the quantities of these commodities which farmers of Alberta may safely produce.

At the present moment Mr. Burns' importations of bacon and hams from Toronto, Omaha and St. Paul aggregate about 100,000 pounds per month.... He is also distributing about 50 hogs a day for local markets in B.C.

During the coming year he anticipates he will need 100 hogs a day to meet the demand for fresh pork. He will handle about the same quantity of mutton.

The interesting point for the producers of Alberta, particularly the northern farmers, lies in the fact that the major part of the fresh pork required for Mr. Burns' business alone, is imported from Manitoba and Ontario.

He hopes to get not only the whole of this pork from Alberta farmers, but is sanguine that in a comparatively short time he will be able to secure enough of the local product to enable him to cure, here or in Vancouver, the million and a quarter pounds of bacon and hams which he is now importing. His business alone will absorb a quantity of pork largely in excess of the present hog production throughout the whole of Alberta.

Rather than import bacon and live pork from the east Mr. Burns could afford to pay five cents per pound for all live hogs of suitable quality delivered in Calgary, or at the same ratio for delivery points along the C. and E. railway. The best weights for his business run from 175 to 225 pounds per hog....

The distributing facilities employed in Mr. Burns' business include cold storage at Revelstoke, Sandon, Nelson, Rossland and Vancouver. These warehouses are all commodious and equipped with the most modern conveniences. The whole system comprises the most efficient distributing plant on the continent of America in the hands of a single individual or firm.... Every resident of Calgary and Alberta will wish him heartily the success which his enterprise, courage and fair dealing richly deserve.<sup>26</sup>

In the previous paragraph, reference is made to cold storage

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<sup>26</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, October 3, 1899. (The fact that Burns hoped to cure bacon and ham at Vancouver seems to be additional evidence that his purchase of the W.A. McIntosh business at Vancouver in 1899 involved an abattoir).



warehouses at Revelstoke, Sandon, Nelson, Rossland and Vancouver. It has not been determined whether the facilities at Revelstoke, Sandon, and Rossland were erected during 1899 as were the buildings at Vancouver<sup>27</sup> and Nelson. At Nelson a brick building was built at the cost of \$25,000 to provide cold storage, retail accommodation, and a suite of offices.<sup>28</sup> The great expansion program of 1899 must have been costly. The source of much of the money is indicated by a newspaper report of that year. "The trade in the Pacific province is largely in the hands of Mr. P. Burns, who ... now carries on a business that probably equals \$1,500,000 per annum..."<sup>29</sup>

From 1899 on, one of the "musts" that was included in the itinerary of dignitaries visiting Calgary was a trip to the Burns packing plant. The first of many tours was that of Sir Charles Tupper, Hon. F. W. G. Aulic, N. F. Davin, M. P. and others in December, 1899.<sup>30</sup>

Calgary became known far and wide as the chief centre of the meat packing industry of Western Canada. The efforts of Patrick Burns had made a dream come true.

However, with the dream a reality, Burns still had problems to face. He found the supply of hogs in Alberta far below his market

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<sup>27</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, February 10, 1899.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., April 11, 1899.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., November 25, 1899.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., December 12, 1899.



needs. His dislike for the creatures<sup>31</sup> may explain why he never raised them commercially in order to help meet his market requirements. The local supply of sheep was also quite inadequate for in 1899 he was importing "mutton from Australia to supply the needs of his customers."<sup>32</sup> His purchase of the McIntosh sheep ranch and its seven thousand head of sheep in May, 1899,<sup>33</sup> may have been his first step toward insuring a portion of the demand. The sheep ranch lay along a branch of Rosebud Creek north of Crossfield, Alberta.<sup>34</sup> The property seems to have consisted of about five thousand acres but as land in this area was still quite open the sheep were not restricted to the immediate ranch lands. The McIntosh property later became part of the personal holdings of C.J. Duggan.<sup>35</sup>

During the winter of 1899-1900 an Englishman, Isaac Elwood, was in charge of feeding five thousand of Burns' sheep in the vicinity of Calgary.<sup>36</sup> In the fall of 1900, Burns bought two thousand sheep from H. Johnson of "the Rosebud", several carloads at Maple Creek and Walsh,

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<sup>31</sup>Interview Mr. Chris Bartsch of Calgary, July 7, 1956. (Mr. Bartsch was in Burns' employ for several years).

<sup>32</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, November 20, 1899.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., May 15, 1899.

<sup>34</sup>Interview Mr. Frank Collicut of Calgary, September 1, 1955. (Mr. Collicut bought cattle for Burns).

<sup>35</sup>Interview Mr. Jack Duggan of Edmonton, March 17, 1957.

<sup>36</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, May 8, 1900.





and was reported holding a band of ten thousand sheep at his camp "north of the Bow" for winter slaughter.<sup>37</sup> In May, 1901, a prairie fire "across the Bow in the direction of Shepard" damaged Burns' sheep camp and scattered sheep in all directions.<sup>38</sup> The two references to camps near the Bow River indicate that Burns had expanded his sheep operations beyond the McIntosh property.<sup>39</sup>

Burns' position in the sheep trade of the North West Territories was commented on in 1901:

The mutton, which provides the chief revenue of the Canadian sheepman, is almost all sold for the British Columbia and Yukon [sic] to P. Burns.... Some go to England on the hoof. He pays usually about \$5.00 per head for two-year-old wethers of the large early-maturing mutton breeds.<sup>40</sup>

What may well have been one of the largest single purchases of sheep ever transacted in the North West Territories took place in 1903. The Knight concern of southern Alberta, having decided to switch to cattle ranching, sold their entire fourteen thousand head of sheep to Burns.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, November 17, 1900.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., May 16, 1901.

<sup>39</sup>At this time government regulations restricted the range sheep industry to a strip of land "along the C.P.R. from Rosebud to Swift Current." (Calgary Daily Herald, November 1, 1901).

<sup>40</sup>Macleod Gazette, November 1, 1901.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., October 2, 1903.



In the late 1890's Burns accelerated his own ranching activities to keep pace with the demand for cattle. In the spring of 1897 it was reported that he would feed "quite a number of cattle on the little Bow this summer."<sup>42</sup> In the fall it was observed that he was shipping a trainload of cattle to Olds for winter pasturing and that he had "another 1,000 head in the south".<sup>43</sup> A report in the spring of 1899 relates that Burns had "wintered about a thousand head of steers in the High River ranges... the best bunch of beef cattle ever wintered in Alberta".<sup>44</sup> Fred Ings' memoirs, in a reference which may be dated about the same time, states that his headquarters were on land "he owned by the Little Bow, east of High River."<sup>45</sup> In remarks which fall into the same period of time, Lachlin McKinnon's memoirs show that Burns wintered cattle in the area where Highwood River enters the Bow.<sup>46</sup> As no specific ranch names are used in these references, it is likely that the Burns cattle were kept at the various sites mentioned under short term lease arrangements. It is also clear that at this time Burns was a "beef" rancher in the southern country as well as at his ranch properties east of Olds.

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<sup>42</sup>Macleod Gazette, March 26, 1897.

<sup>43</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, October 30, 1897.

<sup>44</sup>Alberta Tribune, May 6, 1899.

<sup>45</sup>Fred W. Ings, "Tales from the Midway Ranch", Canadian Cattlemen, (Vol. 5, No. 2, September, 1942), p. 63.

<sup>46</sup>\_\_\_\_\_, Lachlin McKinnon, Pioneer 1865-1948 (Calgary, John D. McAra: Printer, 1956), p. 49. ("his book is a private publication of the McKinnon family").



Burns' larger feeding camps, handling about one thousand steers each, were operated by his own men. Other camps, usually smaller in size, were looked after through arrangements with farmers and ranchers. After the turn of the century, upward to ten of the larger camps were in operation.<sup>47</sup> Camps were located at Olds, Didsbury, Three Hills, Strathmore, Okotoks, High River, Hanton and Calgary.<sup>48</sup> In January, 1901, Fred Stimson of the famous Bar U Ranch commented that Burns was winter feeding "10,000 head of beef cattle."<sup>49</sup> In 1904 he fed from twenty thousand to thirty thousand three, four and five-year-old steers for his spring demands and had stacks of wild hay amounting to forty-five thousand tons.<sup>50</sup> Another year, which cannot be clearly established, saw the putting up of ninety thousand tons of hay and the purchase of another thirty thousand tons.<sup>51</sup> The year in question probably represented a peak operation and undoubtedly a considerable portion of the hay was consumed by horses and large numbers of sheep.

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<sup>47</sup>Interview Mr. Jack Collins of Calgary, August 28, 1956. (Mr. Collins was employed by Burns).

<sup>48</sup>Interviews: Mr. Jack Collins of Calgary, August 28, 1956; Mr. Frank Collicut of Calgary, September 1, 1955; Mr. Thomas Farrell of Calgary, July 24, 1956.

<sup>49</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, January 8, 1904.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., November 30, 1904.

<sup>51</sup>Interview Mr. Jack Collins of Calgary, August 28, 1956.





In the matter of summer pasture for cattle, Burns was never confined to the ranch lands to which he had outright possession. Arrangements were made with ranchers who were not using their lands to full capacity and sometimes men who were withdrawing from ranching turned over their unexpired leases to Burns on a rental basis. It is also known that tracts of land held by the Canadian Pacific Railway were used as pasture grounds before they were opened for settlement.<sup>52</sup>

Evidence suggests that 1901 was the year in which Burns decided to establish his own breeding herds. At the first annual sale of purebred cattle ever held in Calgary, he bought two bulls.<sup>53</sup> During a trip through Manitoba he purchased ten purebred bulls from G.D. Murphy of Carberry.<sup>54</sup> At Calgary, Mr. Duggan bought the breeding stock of Oswald A. Critchley.<sup>55</sup> On another occasion Burns purchased 150 cows.<sup>56</sup> These transactions and the extension of the winter feeding program show in part how he was trying to cope with the increased demand for beef.

In 1900 the old frame building on Atlantic Avenue (134 Ninth

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<sup>52</sup>Interviews: Mr. Frank Collicut of Calgary, September 1, 1955; Mr. Jack Collins of Calgary, August 28, 1956; Mr. R.J. Crawford of Bowness, Alberta, August 29, 1956.

<sup>53</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, April 16, 1901.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., May 1, 1901.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., August 26, 1901.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., September 4, 1901.



Avenue West) which served Burns as an office building was no longer large enough to house his Calgary administrative staff. The structure was demolished and a new two storey stone and brick building was erected on the same site.<sup>57</sup> The new building was soon outgrown and part of the staff was moved to other locations in the vicinity.<sup>58</sup>

Patrick Burns' brother, Thomas, had a large family and as his sons entered manhood they served in various capacities in their uncle's business. Thomas' eldest son, John, took a commerce program at the College of St. Boniface in Manitoba. He graduated in 1901 with the Lieutenant Governor's award as the outstanding graduate of the year.<sup>59</sup> In September, 1901, John came to Calgary and joined his uncle's office staff under the direction of George H. Webster, later a mayor of Calgary.<sup>60</sup> As the years passed, John was groomed to shoulder ever increasing responsibilities in the packing house end of the business and by 1912 he was General Manager. His contributions to the general expansion of the business and in particular to the introduction of new techniques and facilities made him a central figure

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<sup>57</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, July 30, 1900.

<sup>58</sup>Interview Mr. R.S. Tribe of Olds, August 23, 1956. (Mr. Tribe worked in the Burns offices).

<sup>59</sup>Undated clipping in the files of the Calgary Daily Herald, Calgary.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid.



in the company.<sup>61</sup>

At the end of July, 1901, Burns purchased the interests of his partner, Malcolm MacInnes.<sup>62</sup> The meat markets operated in the name of MacInnes and Company at Cranbrook, Fernie and Moyie in British Columbia and at Macleod in Alberta passed into his hands.<sup>63</sup> The MacInnes and Company outlets at Fort Steele, Wardner and Kimberly in British Columbia may not have been transferred at this time.<sup>64</sup> In the interval since 1899, Burns had established markets at Sholt, Nak-sup and Trout Lake in British Columbia but may have ceased operations at Fisher, Kuskanook and Brodigan.<sup>65</sup> On the whole, Burns had further strengthened his position in the retail trade, a move in keeping with the developments in the packing house and ranching end of his business.

In the summer of 1901, P. Burns and Company secured the meat contract on the Crow's Nest and Southern Railway and the extension of

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<sup>61</sup>Interviews: John J. Tighe of Calgary, July 27, 1956. (A long-time employee of the company); Howard J. Kelly of Calgary, August 1, 1956. (A senior officer of Burns & Co. Ltd.).

<sup>62</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, August 12, 1901.

<sup>63</sup>A deduction made by comparing a MacInnes and Company advertisement in the July 26, 1901 issue of the Macleod Gazette with a P. Burns and Company advertisement in the August 23, 1901 issue of the Macleod Gazette. (The March 1, 1901 issue of the Macleod Gazette reported that MacInnes and Burns had just purchased a market in Macleod).

<sup>64</sup>Ibid.

<sup>65</sup>A deduction made by comparing information in the April 5, 1899 issue of the Victoria Colonist with an advertisement in the August 23, 1901 issue of the Macleod Gazette.





that road that was being built north from Jennings, Montana.<sup>66</sup>

W. J. "Blake" Wilson was in charge of the contract for which it was estimated that four to five thousand men would require one and one-half to two pounds of beef per person per day.<sup>67</sup>

Burns' total trade in 1901, consisting of sales in slightly over thirty retail markets, the wholesale trade in packing house products, and transactions in livestock, are suitably summed up in the remarks of Fred Stimson of the famous Bar U Ranch. He said that while Gordon, Ironside and Fares of Winnipeg "did all the export business, the western trade was absolutely in the hands of Mr. Pat Burns."<sup>68</sup>

In the late 1890's a buying pattern was evident to observers of the cattle business in Western Canada. For some years the price the English market was prepared to pay for the best cattle was the main factor which determined prices throughout the trade. Representatives of Gordon, Ironside and Fares of Winnipeg usually toured the country first. They picked out the big three and four-year-old steers for the English market. The heaviest animals were bought as freight on the cattle boats was paid for by space and the cost of shipping the best animals was no more than the worst. After the Gordon, Ironside and Fares firm had made their selection of animals, Burns' buyers arrived on the scene. As Burns' outlets were served by rail, the freight he paid was by the hundred pounds; consequently he was in a

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<sup>67</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, August 2, 1901.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., January 8, 1901.



position to handle the younger and smaller animals to advantage. When freight rates permitted, the rancher whose cattle had the shortest haul to market received the benefit of the difference in freight costs.<sup>69</sup>

In 1902 prominent men of Calgary were trying to encourage officials of the Grand Trunk railway to build a line to the city. Mr. R.B. Bennett, a promising young lawyer, spoke of the opportunities awaiting another railway. He mentioned that "Mr. Burns' cattle shipments alone require 1,500 cars a year."<sup>70</sup> At twenty head to a car, fifteen hundred cars would have transported thirty thousand cattle. It is, of course, difficult to say how Mr. Bennett's remarks should be interpreted. If the fifteen hundred cars were used strictly for the shipment of live cattle, another large number of cars would have been required for the transportation of hogs, sheep, and dressed meats of all kinds. It should also be pointed out that Burns preferred to drive his cattle to Calgary or other markets in order to reduce transportation costs.

In 1901, Mr. William Roper Hull of Calgary spent some months in England, during which time it was reported that an English syndicate had taken up an option to buy his meat firm.<sup>71</sup> In the same year

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<sup>69</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, December 14, 1899.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., November 29, 1902.

<sup>71</sup>Calgary Daily Herald; June 17, 1901; June 25, 1901; August 22, 1901.



Mr. Burns also found it expedient to go to England<sup>72</sup> and it was soon rumoured that he, too, had bought Hull's business.<sup>73</sup> Whatever the drama in England was about, is not known, but the rumours finally bore fruit. On April, 1902, Burns took over one of Hull's ranches and a business block he had under construction in Calgary.<sup>74</sup> On June 1, 1902, he assumed ownership of Hull's Calgary abattoir and his retail markets in Anthracite, Canmore, Banff, Calgary, Wetaskiwin, Golden and Field.<sup>75</sup> (In July Burns bought the Mead Brothers' butcher shops in Blairmore and Frank).<sup>76</sup>

No details as to the amount of money involved in the Hull transaction were ever made public. Hull retained his other ranching properties and no livestock seems to have changed hands. Burns may not have used Hull's abattoir which was located on property which later became the Burnsland Cemetery. An extensive expansion of the Burns packing plant was carried out in 1902 and this may have made the use of

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<sup>72</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, September 1, 1901. (Burns was married while in England).

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., October 6, 1901.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., April 4, 1902. (The deal appears to have taken place in 1901 but the actual transfer in 1902).

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., June 2, 1902; June 5, 1902. (The newspaper may have erred in the list of centres where markets were transferred).

<sup>76</sup>Macleod Gazette, July 18, 1902.





the abattoir unnecessary.<sup>77</sup> The Gallagher-Hull Company which operated an abattoir and a retail market in Edmonton and another market in Strathcona appears to have been untouched by the transaction.<sup>78</sup>

The career of William Roper Hull deserves some attention. Until he sold his business to Burns, he was one of his leading rivals in the meat trade. There are so many parallels in their careers that it would seem that Hull nearly had it within his grasp to become the dominant figure. About the same age as Burns, he was born on December 20, 1856, in England.<sup>79</sup> As a lad of sixteen, he and his brother John sailed from England, crossed the Isthmus of Panama by land, and made their way to Kamloops, British Columbia, where they joined their Uncle Bob.<sup>80</sup> In 1880, the brothers started a ranch of their own at Kamloops.<sup>81</sup>

In 1883, the Hull brothers had a beef contract for the supply of construction camps on the Canadian Pacific Railway in British Columbia.<sup>82</sup> The same year they drove a band of twelve hundred horses

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<sup>77</sup> Calgary Daily Herald, November 11, 1902.

<sup>78</sup> The Alberta Plaindealer, August 1, 1902. (The paper, published in Strathcona, carried a Gallagher-Hull advertisement in this issue).

<sup>79</sup> B.M. Green (editor), Who's Who and Why 1917-1918 (Toronto: International Press, n.d.), p. 630.

<sup>80</sup> Fred W. Ings, "Tales from the Midway Ranch", Canadian Cattlemen (Vol. 7, No. 3, December, 1944), p. 123.

<sup>81</sup> L.V. Kelly, The Range Men (Toronto: William Briggs, 1913), p. 159.

<sup>82</sup> Archibald Oswald MacRae, History of the Province of Alberta (2 vols.; n.p.: The Western Canada History Co., 1912), Vol. 1, p. 501.



through the Crow's Nest Pass to the Territories. Many of the horses were sold to the North-West Cattle Company (Bar U).<sup>83</sup> About 1886, in association with W.P. Trounce, the brothers formed the firm of Hull, Trounce and Company and started a butcher business in Calgary and operated the Pine Coulee or "25 Ranch" west of Nanton.<sup>84</sup> In 1886, the firm was the first to ship cattle east from British Columbia over the newly completed railway. The cattle, four hundred in number, were used to stock the "25".<sup>85</sup> Hull's Calgary operations were further added to with the purchase of the butcher business of Dunn and Lineham, a business originally operated by A.P. Samples and Company.<sup>86</sup> The date of this transaction cannot be established. Around the year 1889, the arrangement with Trounce was ended and Hull Brothers and Company was formed.<sup>87</sup> That year, a slaughter house, built by Angus Sparrow but purchased from Dr. Lafferty, was obtained at Calgary.<sup>88</sup>

In 1891, W.R. Hull bought, for a rumoured thirty-five thousand dollars, the four thousand acre property then known as the Government

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<sup>83</sup>Kelly, op. cit., p. 159.

<sup>84</sup>\_\_\_\_\_, The New West (Winnipeg: Canadian Historical Publishing Co., 1888), p. 129-130; L.V. Kelly, The Range Men (Toronto: Briggs, 1913), p. 194.

<sup>85</sup>Kelly, op. cit., p. 194.

<sup>86</sup>The Okotoks Review, April 25, 1913.

<sup>87</sup>Calgary Herald: January 16, 1889; December 4, 1889.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., September 18, 1899.



Farm.<sup>89</sup> It was located on the west side of the Bow River a few miles below Calgary. The next year Mr. Hull was one of the promoters who backed Alfred Ernest Cross in the establishment of the Calgary Brewing and Malting Company.<sup>90</sup> A contract for the supply of beef for the construction camps of the Nelson and Fort Sheppard Railway in British Columbia was obtained by "Messrs. Hull, Leeson and Scott" in 1893.<sup>91</sup> In 1895, the Hull brothers split their holdings with brother John taking over the bulk of the retail markets that had been established in British Columbia.<sup>92</sup> The year 1899 saw W.R. Hull enter a business arrangement at Edmonton with C. Gallagher to form the Gallagher-Hull Company.<sup>93</sup> The activities of Mr. Hull after the sale of much of his business to Burns in 1902 are not of immediate concern but he continued to play an important role in the business life of Alberta until his death in 1923.

Burns' purchase of the Hull business is interesting in that it is a splendid example of how he would strengthen his position in the meat industry in one bold stroke. A man of less ambition and with qualms about the future would have been content to move cautiously. Burns never seemed to set a fixed goal for himself. No sooner was an immed-

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<sup>89</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, November 20, 1891. (The name of the paper varied from time to time).

<sup>90</sup>Ibid., March 21, 1892.

<sup>91</sup>Calgary Herald, May 15, 1893.

<sup>92</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, March 11, 1895.

<sup>93</sup>The Alberta Tribune, October 14, 1899. (A Calgary paper).





iate objective reached than others were in sight. Where others detected something that would cause hesitation, Burns went ahead with quick decision. His confidence in himself and in Western Canada was unflinching. He could have called a halt and watched his wealth accumulate but there would have been no challenge in that. It would seem strange if Burns did not consider the dollar a symbol of success, yet in his hands it was something more. It represented a creative power which was never to be left idle, never to be accrued for its own sake.

Burns completed the construction of the building on the southwest corner of Centre Street and Eighth Avenue for which W.R. Gull had laid the foundations.<sup>94</sup> The "Burns block", as it was called, was built of stone and had dimensions of fifty by one hundred thirty feet.<sup>95</sup> Upon its completion the Canadian Bank of Commerce occupied the ground floor while Burns had offices in part of the second floor for several years.<sup>96</sup> When it was hinted that a clock tower might grace the northeast corner of the building and be of great use to the general public, Burns acted.<sup>97</sup> Arrangements were made and the clock was installed

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<sup>94</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, April 4, 1902.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid., October 4, 1902.

<sup>96</sup>Ibid., August 22, 1902. (The writer believes that this was the building in which the bank opened its first Calgary branch).

<sup>97</sup>Ibid., September 18, 1903.



early in 1905.<sup>98</sup>

The ranch which Burns obtained from W.R. Hull was located along the west side of the Bow River below Calgary. Around 1880, the Dominion Government set up supply farm No. 20<sup>99</sup> near the mouth of Fish Creek where it empties into the Bow River.<sup>100</sup> Part of the property included a farm bought from the Irishman, John Glenn, one of the first farmers in the vast area which became Alberta.<sup>101</sup> Some of the land was put under irrigation during Hull's tenure.<sup>102</sup> The large brick ranch home on the property was built in 1896 after fire had destroyed the original log dwelling.<sup>103</sup> Before the turn of the century the property was popularly known as the Government Farm but under Burns' ownership it was called the Bow Valley Ranch.

Burns continued to add various properties to the Bow Valley Ranch until at one time it was seventeen thousand acres in size.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>98</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, February 18, 1905.

<sup>99</sup>An undated clipping in the files of Calgary Public Library identifies the farm as "No. 20." The clipping is a reprint of a news item of the February 6, 1884, issue of the Calgary Herald.

<sup>100</sup>Kelly, op. cit., p. 134.

<sup>101</sup>ibid.

<sup>102</sup>Interview Mr. Edward Hoschka of Calgary, March 3, 1956. (Mr. Hoschka was a foreman of the Bow Valley Ranch for many years).

<sup>103</sup>Interview Mr. Edward Hoschka of Calgary, March 3, 1956

<sup>104</sup>Interview Mr. Thomas Farrell of Calgary, July 24, 1956. (A nephew of P. Burns. For several years Mr. Farrell was manager of the various ranches).



In part, his purchases were made to make his holdings continuous from the ranch to the fourteen hundred acres adjacent to his Calgary packing plant. At intervals he secured control of the Captain Gordon, the Sheriff King, and the Ross properties and the gap was closed.<sup>105</sup> A second John Glen farm, the Boulton, Bull, MacInnes, Schroeder,<sup>106</sup> Wooley-Dodd and DeMille<sup>107</sup> properties were other lands added from time to time to expand the ranch to the west and south.

The ideal location of the Bow Valley Ranch in respect to the Calgary packing plant was of great benefit. Cattle bought in the area south of Calgary or cattle from Burns' other southern holdings were brought in great drives to this ranch. Here the cattle could be fed, watered, and rested before being driven to the packing plant. Winter feeding was carried on in a large scale on feed lots at one of the properties making up the northern portion of the ranch.<sup>108</sup> Foremen of the Bow Valley Ranch during Pat Burns' lifetime were T.W. Bannister, Norman Williams, and Ed Hoschka. Calgary was always pleased to have Burns offer the hospitality of the ranch to distinguished people visiting the city. A highlight of any visit was the consump-

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<sup>105</sup>Interview Mr. Edward Hoschka of Calgary, March 3, 1956.

<sup>106</sup>Interview Mr. Scotty Rowland of Calgary, August 29, 1956.  
 (A long-time employee of P. Burns).

<sup>107</sup>Information found in files maintained by the trustees of the Burns estate, Michael Building, Calgary.

<sup>108</sup>Interview Mr. Edward Hoschka of Calgary, March 3, 1956.





tion of the mouth-watering food prepared by the Chinese cook, Charlie Yuen.<sup>109</sup>

In the summer of 1902, P. Burns and Company began to ship artificially frozen meat to distant points. One newspaper hailed the event as marking an "epoch in the meat business of Calgary" and stated that "no firm west of Toronto with the exception of Vancouver" had ever shipped artificially frozen meat.<sup>110</sup> Previously, cold storage plants were used to preserve meat but frozen meats were shipped only during the winter months. The first shipment made by Burns consisted of four hundred head of dressed cattle. The meat had been kept in cold storage for ten days at a temperature of about ten degrees above zero. Each quarter was wrapped in cotton and then in burlap to protect it during handling. On July 19, the meat was loaded on twelve refrigerator cars of a special train leaving for Vancouver. At Vancouver the meat was transshipped to a cold storage steamer bound for the Yukon.<sup>111</sup>

Bob Edwards, the humorous editor of the popular High River Eye Opener made a few remarks in 1902:

We have gone to the trouble of canvassing a number of prominent men on their ideals of happiness. Pat

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<sup>109</sup> Interview Mr. Edward Hoshka of Calgary, March 3, 1956.

<sup>110</sup> Calgary Daily Herald, July 21, 1902.

<sup>111</sup> Calgary Daily Herald, July 21, 1902. (Another account of the shipment was carried in the July 18 and July 19 issues of the Albertan and the Alberta Tribune).



Burns says that his idea of happiness would lie in attending the funerals of rival butchers, ... [R.B.] Bennett, a seat in heaven with the privilege of addressing the angels from the throne; P. ["Paddy"] J. Nolan, to live in a country populated by wealthy cattle thieves and be the only lawyer outside the Crown Prosecutor; ... George Lane, to be able to ship steers to the coast in flying machines; ....<sup>112</sup>

At the time of the impending visit of the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York in 1901, a Calgary newspaper columnist suggested bestowing titles on the local "nigh muck-a-mucks". In his list Burns was to become "Sir P. Burns, K.C.R. (Knight of the Cattle Range), suggested crest, steer rampant," while the future prime minister of Canada was listed "R.B. Bennett, I.A.B.G. (I am a Big Gun)."<sup>113</sup>

In 1903, Patrick Burns broke new ground by shipping frozen pork to Australia.<sup>114</sup> The shipments were acclaimed as marking "a new era in the mercantile business of Calgary".<sup>115</sup> In opening new markets for frozen beef and pork Burns was serving the interests of his countrymen as well as expanding his own business.

It was in 1903 that the local supply of hogs temporarily caught up to Burns' requirements. To a large extent the increase in hog production was a result of publicity given to his remarks as to his packing plant needs and the demand created by his buying agents.

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<sup>112</sup>Macleod Gazette, December 12, 1902. A reprint from the Eye Opener. (Brackets in the quotation are the writer's).

<sup>113</sup>The Albertan and the Alberta Tribune, September 25, 1901.

<sup>114</sup>Calgary Daily Herald: February 3, 1903; February 25, 1903.

<sup>115</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, February 3, 1903.



For a time in 1903 the number of hogs available exceeded Burns' expectations but he felt obligated to absorb the supply. The rush of hogs necessitated a rapid expansion of curing facilities. Mr. Chris Bartsch, a former Klondike meat merchant, was put in charge of an emergency program.<sup>116</sup>

Hundreds of hogs were killed and put in cold storage while arrangements were made for pickling. Barrels and vats were secured from the neighbouring brewery and two new smoke houses were quickly erected. Pickling operations were soon under way and with very pleasing results. The cured products were very well received by the retailers. In fact, the butchers no longer wanted the smoked and cured supplies which Burns was accustomed to ship in from such centres as Minneapolis if Burns could supply his own product. The imported meats often deteriorated by the time they were distributed to the retail shops.<sup>117</sup>

The marketing of greatly increased quantities of lard was also tackled. Mr. Bartsch suggested that the use of plain little lard pails should be discontinued and a line of different sized pails with more attractive labelling be introduced. Mr. Burns told Bartsch to go ahead with the idea. Bartsch discussed the matter of a label with his wife and she produced a design which featured the shamrock. Mr.

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<sup>116</sup>Interview Mr. Chris Bartsch of Calgary, July 7, 1956.  
 (Mr. Bartsch was employed by Burns at this time).

<sup>117</sup>Interview Mr. Chris Bartsch of Calgary, July 7, 1956.





Thoburn Allan, the office official, submitted the design to Burns but it didn't meet with his approval. His main objection seemed to be that the design was "too Irish". However, after some persuasion he consented to its use. The Shamrock Label was placed on the lard pails in 1904 and afterwards extended to other Burns products.<sup>118</sup>

In the interests of his British Columbia business, Burns announced plans to erect cold storage plants at Fernie and Revelstoke in 1903.<sup>119</sup> West of the Rockies the meat business of Rippon and Mitchell was taken over at Wetaskiwin.<sup>120</sup> A beef contract for the supply of some five thousand men employed on the construction of the "extension of the Great Northern in Montana" was a feature of the year's operations.<sup>121</sup>

John R. Hull, whose brother W.R. Hull had sold his meat interests to Burns in 1902, did likewise in June, 1904.<sup>122</sup> J.R. Hull and

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<sup>118</sup>Interview Mr. Chris Bartsch of Calgary, July 7, 1956.

<sup>119</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, May 1, 1903. (In the case of Revelstoke the announcement raises a question. On October 3, 1899, the Herald listed Revelstoke as one of the places where the company had a cold storage plant. One of the reports may be in error or the plant to be erected in 1903 may have been to replace an earlier building. It has been noticed that in later years towns which previously had cold storage plants are no longer included in lists of such facilities. Perhaps transportation improvements eliminated the need for some plants or what was earlier classified as a cold storage plant was no longer considered as worthy of the name).

<sup>120</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, June 13, 1903.

<sup>121</sup>Ibid., March 24, 1903.

<sup>122</sup>Ibid., May 1, 1903. (Reprint from the Hanloops Sentinel).



Company's headquarters was located at Kamloops, B.C., and butcher shops were owned in surrounding centres.<sup>123</sup> In Alberta, P. Burns & Co. opened a new shop at Coleman in the Crow's Nest Pass.<sup>124</sup> On the ranching side of the picture, evidence of Burns' activities in the country south of Calgary is given in a January newspaper report: "C.J. Duggan inspected stock at several of P. Burns' feeding ranches at Janton, this week."<sup>125</sup> The item probably refers to properties of district farmers or ranchers on which arrangements were made to feed cattle.

Patrick Burns obtained title to another ranch in 1905. As the brand "CK" was used by a previous owner by the name of Charlie Knight,<sup>126</sup> the property was known as the "CK Ranch." The ranch was situated about seven miles north-west of Calgary lying chiefly in Township 25, Range 2, West of Meridian 5. In later years the highway leading from Calgary

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<sup>123</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, June 7, 1904.

<sup>124</sup>Ibid., March 11, 1895.

<sup>125</sup>Ibid., January 9, 1904.

<sup>126</sup>Correspondence in the files of the Brand Recorders Office, Edmonton shows that the CK brand was transferred from Chas. Knight to the Calgary Cattle Company in July, 1903. In February, 1915, P. Burns requested a renewal of the CK brand and it was subsequently transferred from the Calgary Cattle Company. In August, 1905, the Calgary Cattle Company transferred the dl brand to Patrick Burns. The transfer of brands may indicate that P. Burns bought part or all of the interests of the Calgary Cattle Company when he obtained the CK Ranch in 1905. Evidence in the Calgary Daily Herald indicates that the Calgary Cattle Company operated an abattoir in Calgary in 1904 and an advertisement lists a meat market in 1905 (Daily Herald: August 12, 1904; December 14, 1905). George Webster, office manager for Burns around the turn of the century is mentioned as the manager of the company (Daily Herald: November 18, 1904; May 2, 1905).



to Banff on the north side of the river skirted a portion of the land. The size of the property at the time of purchase cannot be accurately determined since, in addition to the deeded land, leased lands appear to have been held. Like many of the Burns ranches its size fluctuated from time to time. When the property was sold some years after the death of Mr. Burns it consisted of seventy-three hundred acres of deeded land.<sup>127</sup>

Like the Bow Valley Ranch, the CK ranch was close enough to Calgary to complement operations at the packing plant. The ranch was almost entirely devoted to sheep during most of the period it was operated by Burns. As many as twelve thousand sheep were handled with something like three thousand ewes forming the year to year breeding stock. The foreman for many years was a big Scotsman by the name of John McInnis. A few commands in Gaelic from John would put his sneepdogs to work with the flock. Hounds were also kept to run down coyotes that bothered the sheep. Until the growth of Calgary interfered, it was an interesting sight to see John driving a flock of two or three thousand sheep through the city by way of the Riverside bridge to the packing plant.<sup>128</sup>

Turning briefly to political developments it will be remembered

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<sup>127</sup>Information for this paragraph was obtained from files made available by Mr. Thomas Farrell of Calgary and from an interview with Mr. Farrell on July 24, 1956. (Mr. Farrell was manager of the Burns ranches for several years).

<sup>128</sup>Interview Mr. Herb Clark of Calgary, October 6, 1956. (Mr. Clark was a Burns ranch employee for several years).





that on September 1, 1905, the new provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta were born. Previous to that time Alberta was a postal district of lesser size in the North West Territories. Patrick Burns' opinions about the change were as follows:

I think the general feeling is that we should largely be left alone to manage our own affairs. There is a feeling of resentment against eastern interference in any shape more than is actually necessary. Western men fancy they understand the situation far better than it is possible for eastern people to do, and they would prefer having all matters in their own hands. The change will be welcome, and means a marked advance this year through both new provinces. The inrush of settlers is already greater this year than last, great as it was then. The newcomers are a splendid lot of people, and I look for a great crowd of them before the season is over.<sup>129</sup>

Burns did not view the inrush of settlers with the alarm generally expressed by western ranchers. The restriction placed on range leases in favour of homesteading rights of the settlers did not affect him as seriously as they did the average rancher. As long as cattle were raised, whether by farmers or ranchers, Burns' buying operations and packing house business would continue. The increase in population meant a larger consumption of meat products.

In 1905 his views were reported as follows:

The incoming of settlers has not interfered with the cattle industry. Mr. Burns thinks that each succeeding year will see cattle trade assuming vaster proportions. The settlers on small holdings will all raise stock on a small scale, thus increasing rather than decreasing the total export.<sup>130</sup>

In 1907 Burns said:

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<sup>129</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, March 27, 1905.

<sup>130</sup>Ibid., October 5, 1905.



The days of the big ranchers are numbered, but the days of the stock farmers where three and four hundred head of good steers are kept and fed, are just beginning, and in a few years we will, in Alberta, have fifty of such farms where we have one ranch today.<sup>131</sup>

Despite Burns' remarks, he personally, was not prepared to get out of ranching. He continued to acquire ranch properties and when various factors brought about a slump in beef production, he accelerated his ranching activities. In 1906, he acquired the Ricardo Ranch which lay on the eastern side of the Bow River, a short distance downstream from his Bow Valley Ranch which lay on the western side of the river.<sup>132</sup>

It has not been determined whether or not Burns acquired the ranch directly from one of its founders, William Crawley Ricardo, an Englishman who earlier had left Alberta and had become manager of Lord Aberdeen's Coldstream Ranch near Vernon, B.C.<sup>133</sup> The Ricardo Ranch was founded by W.C. Ricardo and a man named Williams in 1888 or early 1889 for the purpose of raising horses.<sup>134</sup> Previously they had operated in the Pincher Creek area.<sup>135</sup> Their brand, a vented AR con-

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<sup>131</sup>Calgary Daily News, October 14, 1907.

<sup>132</sup>Interview Mr. Thomas Farrell of Calgary, July 24, 1956.

<sup>133</sup>Fred W. Ings, "Tales from the Midway Ranch," Canadian Cattlemen (Vol. 8, No. 1, June, 1945), p. 38; J.W.C. Haldane, 3000 Miles Across Canada (London: Sempkin, Marshall, Kent & Co., 1900), p. 238 ff.

<sup>134</sup>NacLeod Gazette, January 31, 1889. (A brand advertisement).

<sup>135</sup>Ibid., March 29, 1887. (A brand advertisement).



nected,<sup>136</sup> was obtained when horses were bought from the Alberta Ranch Company in 1886.<sup>137</sup> In the 1890's, a man named Bevin has been mentioned as having an interest in the ranch.<sup>138</sup>

The Ricardo Ranch was used by Burns for cattle operations. Like the Bow Valley Ranch, it was convenient to Calgary, being but seventeen miles from the packing plant. Five miles of river frontage was another favourable feature of the ranch. At one time Burns had one or two small properties between the Ricardo Ranch and Calgary, one being the Brecon Ranch opposite the mouth of Fish Creek. In 1925, the Ricardo Ranch had a change of ownership, but it returned to Burns in 1929. In the late 1930's, the ranch had 3,390 acres of deeded land, but it may have been larger in the early years. Al Foster and his nephew Bob Foster were the foremen during Burns' ownership.<sup>139</sup>

In January, 1906, a special agricultural edition of the Calgary Daily Herald stated that P. Burns and Company was "the largest corporation in the West dealing in livestock and meat" and that the firm had markets "in sixty cities and towns throughout Alberta, British Columbia and the Yukon."<sup>140</sup> In five years Burns had doubled the

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<sup>136</sup>MacLeod Gazette, January 2, 1890.

<sup>137</sup>Ibid., November 16, 1886.

<sup>138</sup>Interview Mr. Bob Foster of Calgary, August 29, 1956. (Mr. Foster was a foreman of the ranch during the period of Burns' ownership).

<sup>139</sup>Interview Mr. Bob Foster of Calgary, August 29, 1956. (The Ricardo Ranch lay in Township 22, Range 29, West of Meridian 4).

<sup>140</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, January 29, 1906.





number of places where he had retail stores.<sup>141</sup> In Calgary, the year 1906 saw a program of expansion being carried out. The pork packing plant was enlarged as were the abattoir and cold storage facilities.<sup>142</sup> Burns handled sixty-five thousand head of cattle that year.<sup>143</sup>

In British Columbia, Burns was making a great effort to strengthen his position in the meat trade. At Vancouver, a new 400,000 packing plant and abattoir was to be opened in the summer of 1907.<sup>144</sup> Plans for the plant had been under way for some time. In 1903, a syndicate headed by Burns had bought a twenty-five acre site with five hundred feet of waterfront from Alex Morrison of Armstrong and Morrison for \$50,000.<sup>145</sup> At the time, it was thought that the land was being bought for speculative purposes,<sup>146</sup> but in 1905 Burns made his plans known.<sup>147</sup>

The erection of the Vancouver plant can be taken as evidence that Burns was in tune with the rapid growth of population in British Columbia in the first years of the century. In 1901, the population of the province was 178,567, but ten years later it was 392,480.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>141</sup>See page 96.

<sup>142</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, January 29, 1906.

<sup>143</sup>J.C. Hopkins, The Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs 1907 (Toronto: The Annual Review Publishing Co. Ltd., 1908), p. 482.

<sup>144</sup>Vancouver Province, June 28, 1907.

<sup>145</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, December 7, 1903.

<sup>146</sup>Ibid.                      <sup>147</sup>Ibid., August 24, 1905.

<sup>148</sup>The Canada Year Book 1911 (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1912), p. 2.



In the same period the population of Vancouver rose from 27,010 to 100,401.<sup>149</sup> The new packing plant enabled Burns to improve his distribution system by eliminating some of the shipments of dressed meats from Calgary and it facilitated the establishment of new retail outlets in Vancouver and vicinity. The waterfront location of the plant suggests he wished to be in a good position to handle ocean shipments of meat products.

There were other important events in Burns' life in the period under discussion. On September 4, 1901, Miss Eileen Ellis became his bride. The marriage between the forty-seven year old Burns and the beautiful twenty-seven year old Miss Ellis took place in London, England. Born on October 8, 1873, Eileen Louisa Frances Anna was the eldest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Ellis of Penticton, British Columbia.<sup>150</sup>

The bride's father was born in Dublin, Ireland. In 1864, as a youth of twenty years, he came to Vancouver Island, having made the trip on a sailing vessel travelling the Cape Horn route. Two or so years later, Tom Ellis made his way to the Okanagan Valley of central British Columbia. In the years which followed he became the cattle king of the Okanagan.<sup>151</sup> In the 1890's the cattle trade introduced

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<sup>149</sup>The Canada Year Book 1911 (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1912), p. 7.

<sup>150</sup> Interview Miss Kathleen Ellis of Penticton, B.C., August 18, 1955. (A sister-in-law of Mr. Burns).

<sup>151</sup> Grant MacEwan, The Sodbusters (Toronto: Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd., n.d.), p. 104. (Mr. MacEwan gives a much fuller account of Thomas Ellis).



Pat Burns to the Ellis family.

It is said that his first sight of Eileen Ellis was sufficient to make Pat Burns resolve to marry her.<sup>152</sup> The first time he took Eileen dancing at Penticton, B.C., he stepped on her dress.<sup>153</sup> Just when Miss Ellis consented to become his bride is not known but it seems significant that in July, 1900, Burns began construction on a stone mansion on a twenty lot site in Calgary.<sup>154</sup> The home was not completed at the time of their marriage in 1901 and was not occupied until January, 1903.<sup>155</sup>

The property on which Burns built his home took up nearly all of the block west of the park on which the Calgary Public Library was erected a few years later. For years, 510 Thirteenth Avenue West, was one of the finest residences in Calgary. The architect for the structure was F.A. Rattenbury and the general contractor was Thomas Underwood.<sup>156</sup> The original contract price was \$32,000 but improvement to the grounds and furnishings added many thousands to the cost. There were eighteen rooms, including ten bedrooms and four bathrooms. The rooms were finished in quarter-cut oak and there were solid oak doors throughout. The sandstone for the residence was quarried at Shaga-

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<sup>152</sup>Interview Miss Kathleen Ellis of Penticton, B.C., August 18, 1955.

<sup>153</sup>Interview Miss Kathleen Ellis of Penticton, B.C., August 18, 1955.

<sup>154</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, July 16, 1900; July 20, 1900; July 21, 1900.

<sup>155</sup>Ibid., January 29, 1903.

<sup>156</sup>Clipping in the Calgary Public Library, dated August 31, 1939. (Source not determined).





nappi on the western outskirts of Calgary and was cut on the building site.<sup>157</sup> The front of the home faced south. High on the south-east corner was a curious looking heraldic design consisting of a shamrock and a thistle engraved on a shield-shaped section of stone. A low stone wall surrounded the grounds.<sup>158</sup>

Mr. Mayhew, the resident gardener from 1917 to 1937, recalls that Mr. Burns admired flowers but found a cow more interesting. Distinguished visitors who expected to be shown the beautiful grounds and flowers would find Pat hustling them away for a personal lesson on the fine points of a good cow. Of course, they didn't have far to go, for throughout the years, Patrick Burns housed a cow on property he owned on the block to the north. He was probably the only person in residential Calgary who was allowed to do so. He liked to keep a beef type of cow such as a Hereford. Once when a fresh cow was required to replace one whose milk supply was dwindling, Billy Gannister sent a Holstein. Burns looked on the Holstein with obvious disfavour for after all he wasn't in the dairy business. He wanted a Hereford that could raise a good calf.<sup>159</sup>

The Burns' residence was associated with the hospitality of the

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<sup>157</sup>Clipping in the Calgary Public Library, dated August 31, 1939. (Source not determined).

<sup>158</sup>The writer made these observations before the house was demolished.

<sup>159</sup>Interview Mr. Wm. Mayhew of Midnapore, Alberta, September 3, 1955. (Mr. Burns' resident gardener).



West for nearly thirty-five years. Homeless waifs were taken in and fed, clothed, and sheltered until their problems were solved.<sup>160</sup> In addition to personal guests, scores of distinguished visitors to Calgary were entertained there. When Alberta became a province in 1905, it was P. Burns who gave the reception for Sir Wilfred and Lady Laurier and other dignitaries when they visited Calgary.<sup>161</sup> Members of the royal family, governors-general, and a various assortment of aristocrats, statesmen, authors, and politicians found that Calgary had an unofficial Government House.<sup>162</sup>

On August 14, 1906, a son was born to Mr. and Mrs. Patrick Burns. One can imagine how much Michael,<sup>163</sup> their only child, meant to them. It was not too long before the father proudly introduced his heir to the employees at the Ninth Avenue office.<sup>164</sup> Once someone marvelled at Burns' riches. He replied, "I am wealthy in money but my brother Thomas has wealth in children."<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>160</sup>Interview Miss Kathleen Ellis of Penticton, B.C., August 18, 1955.

<sup>161</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, September 5, 1905.

<sup>162</sup>Interview Mr. Wm. Mayhew of Midnapore, September 3, 1955.

<sup>163</sup>The boy's Christian names were Patrick Thomas Michael.

<sup>164</sup>Interview Mr. R.S. Tribe of Olds, August 23, 1956. (Mr. Tribe was an employee in this office).

<sup>165</sup>Interview Mrs. A.C. Sparrow of Calgary, July 19, 1956. (A niece of P. Burns).



## CHAPTER V

### DIFFICULT YEARS (1907-1913)

The severe winter of 1906-07 was a cruel blow to the ranchers of Western Canada.<sup>1</sup> In Alberta, cattle losses were estimated to range all the way from 5 to 90 per cent.<sup>2</sup> Burns found the spring and summer of 1907 a difficult time. His own cattle losses, the poor quality of the animals being marketed, and a general financial crisis<sup>3</sup> were some of the problems he faced. His close friend and manager of ranches, C.J. Duggan, assisted him by meeting payroll demands and by placing something like \$50,000 at his disposal to help secure cattle contracts.<sup>4</sup> Some of the ranchers who sold cattle to Burns that spring were able to take notes for later payment. When the bank Burns was dealing with did not share his optimism for the future of the cattle trade, he switched his account to one where credit could be obtained.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The consequences of the severe winter on Burns' ranching operations are discussed in the next chapter.

<sup>2</sup>Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture of the Province of Alberta 1907 (Edmonton: Government Printer, 1908), p. 6.

<sup>3</sup>Eric John Hanson, "A Financial History of Alberta, 1905-1950" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Clark University, Worcester, Massachusetts, 1952), p. 114. (Available on microcard in the Rutherford Library, University of Alberta).

<sup>4</sup>Interview Mr. Jack Collins of Calgary, August 28, 1956. (Mr. Collins was in Burns' employ at the time).

<sup>5</sup>Interview Mr. Jack Collins of Calgary, August 28, 1956. (Mr. Collins was in Burns' employ at the time).





There was stormy weather for Burns on another front in 1907. The previous year a movement had got under way to have an inter-Provincial investigation of an alleged combine among Western cattle dealers.<sup>6</sup> The investigation may have been inspired in part by events in the United States. Upton Sinclair's sensational book, The Jungle, published in 1906, was a condemnation of the practices of the American packing house companies, and President Theodore Roosevelt's efforts to curtail the powers of various trusts were getting widespread attention.

In 1907, Manitoba and Alberta began an inquiry into the meat industry. The Beef Commission, as it was popularly called, held hearings at various points in Alberta and Manitoba. Although many aspects of the industry were being investigated, it is clear that a great deal of attention was paid to the position of P. Burns and Company of Calgary and the firm of Gordon, Ironside and Fares of Winnipeg. Patrick Burns had reached the point where success could prove dangerous.

The Calgary hearing of the commission was particularly interesting as Burns gave evidence during the June 25 sitting. Extracts from various newspapers may help recreate the scene.<sup>7</sup>

In every particular Mr. Burns was positive and his answers to questions put to him by Mr. "Paddy" Nolan resembled speeches rather than answers to questions.

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<sup>6</sup>J.C. Hopkins (editor), The Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs 1907 (Toronto: The Annual Review Publishing Company Ltd., 1908), p. 481.

<sup>7</sup>The writer has tried to find an official transcript of the evidence submitted to the Beef Commission but with no success.

<sup>8</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, June 25, 1907.



He stated that he had a large number of buyers purchasing cattle for his business and had never had any difficulty in procuring all the cattle he wanted. When asked as to how he gauged prices, Mr. Burns stated that when prices were high he fixed his prices according to the Old Country market, but when prices were low he fixed them at what he thought they ought to bring.<sup>9</sup>

When asked if he had any arrangement with any firm or company in Alberta, Mr. Burns became rather indignant, and stated that he had no arrangement with any persons, in Canada, America or the world.<sup>10</sup>

'I am running my own show, standing on my own bottom, have nothing to do with any person else, and don't want to. I never squeezed a man and for that reason I have all the business I want and I pay the highest wages. Certainly I like opposition. I like it because it makes business better, and the more the merrier!<sup>11</sup>

This, Mr. Burns stated, is a free country, and any man is not bound to do business with P. Burns and Co., but he said that many times he had overpaid for the cattle he bought according to the market prices, and thought that last winter alone he had overpaid \$150,000.<sup>12</sup>

Questioned by Mr. Nolan with regard to the alleged existence of a combine, Mr. Burns became emphatic and eloquent. 'There never has been a combine in cattle in the existence of the country,' he declared in a loud voice. 'The prices which I gave, he continued, 'are open to the world and higher than the prices which prevail in Winnipeg and in other places.'<sup>13</sup>

'There are a lot of people in this country who think it is the right thing to knock the C.P.R., Gordon and

<sup>9</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, June 25, 1907.

<sup>10</sup>Calgary Morning Albertan, June 26, 1907.

<sup>11</sup>Strattona Plaindealer, June 26, 1907.

<sup>12</sup>Calgary Morning Albertan, July 26, 1907.

<sup>13</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, June 25, 1907.



Ironsides and Burns, but I want to say that we three have made this country. Why if I were to close down tomorrow in ten days the people in this country would be starving. Q. Do you not think, Mr. Burns, that there would be somebody found to take your place if you went out of business? A. Not much. They could not do it. This business of mine has taken years to build up.<sup>14</sup>

In the course of the Calgary hearing, Burns expressed his views on many other aspects of the cattle trade.<sup>15</sup> Evidence given by other witnesses in Calgary and places elsewhere are equally interesting. The important matter, however, was the findings of the Beef Commission when it issued its report. Two key points among others were:

6. That we do not find any combine in restraint of trade in the retail butchers' trade.

14. That we have not found that there exists or has existed any combination in restraint of or affecting trade in cattle, sheep, hogs or any or all of them in the province or elsewhere such as would infringe upon the provisions of the Criminal Code of Canada.<sup>16</sup>

Elsewhere the Beef Commission reported:

We would like to emphasize that the monopolistic state of the retail meat trade is a very undesirable

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<sup>14</sup>Calgary Morning Albertan, December 27, 1907. (Mr. Burns stated later that his remarks about "starving" had been misconstrued and that he never intended the words to mean what had been taken out of them. See Morning Albertan, December 28, 1907).

<sup>15</sup>The fullest account of the Calgary hearing seems to have been carried in the June 25 issue of the Calgary Daily Herald.

<sup>16</sup>"Report of Beef Commission" Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture of the Province of Alberta, 1907 (Edmonton: Government Printer, 1908), p. 46.





condition of affairs for this province. It has been charged against P. Burns & Co. that they use doubtful methods in order to establish trade in certain towns. With respect to this, we have to say that there is no direct proof in the evidence that this is true.

A great deal has been said against P. Burns & Co. in their relation to the meat trade of the province. Viewing the evidence as a whole, your commissioners are impressed with the fact that many of the accusations against Mr. Burns<sup>17</sup> and his company cannot be substantiated under oath.

The report of the Beef Commission cleared Burns of allegations levelled against his firm with one reservation, that the monopolistic state of the retail trade in Alberta was undesirable. The position of Burns in the retail trade in Alberta during 1907 had proven difficult to determine but a telephone directory published in June, 1908, lists Burns butcher shops in the following centres: Banff, Blairmore, Frank, Coleman, Lille, Macleod, and two shops in Lethbridge.<sup>18</sup> In Calgary, the firm probably had three outlets<sup>19</sup> and in the northern centres, Wetaskiwin,<sup>20</sup> Strathcona<sup>21</sup> and Edmonton<sup>22</sup> seem to have had one shop each. In view of the fact that Burns had no butcher shops east

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<sup>17</sup>"Report of Beef Commission" Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture of the Province of Alberta, 1907 (Edmonton: Government Printer, 1908), p. 37.

<sup>18</sup>Alberta Government -- Official Telephone Directory No. 1, June, 1908. (No details of publication available).

<sup>19</sup>Henderson's Calgary City Directory 1910 (Winnipeg: Henderson Directories Ltd., 1910), p. 277.

<sup>20</sup>Strathcona Plaindealer, July 16, 1907.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

<sup>22</sup>Edmonton City Directory 1905-06 (Edmonton: The Edmonton Printing and Publishing Co. Ltd., n.d.), p. 19.



of a line drawn through Edmonton, Calgary, and Lethbridge, one might wonder how he enjoyed the monopoly of the provincial retail trade through the operation of approximately thirteen outlets. In Edmonton and Strathcona particularly, firms such as Gainer, J.Y. Griffith, Vogel, Gallagher-Hull, and seven or more smaller firms were competitors for trade.<sup>23</sup>

The activities of the Gordon, Ironside and Fares Co. Ltd. of Winnipeg should be briefly outlined in order to show its position in the packing house and cattle industry in the first decade of this century. The firm had a large packing plant in Winnipeg and two smaller ones at Kenora and Fort William. A number of cold storage plants were maintained in Saskatchewan and Ontario. The company had two large leases and a large interest in the Bar O Ranch in Alberta. In southwestern Saskatchewan the firm had the "76 Ranch" and leased lands were held in the United States. Gordon, Ironside and Fares was the dominant company in the export of cattle to the British Isles, but was gradually withdrawing from the export trade because of the decline in ranching. The concern does not seem to have had any retail outlets.<sup>24</sup>

In the period of time under discussion, P. Burns and Gordon, Ironside and Fares were, within certain limits, rivals in the cattle

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<sup>23</sup>Strathcona Plaindealer, January 4, 1907; Edmonton City Directory 1905-06, p. 85.

<sup>24</sup>Ashley G. Brown (editor), The Prairie Provinces of Canada (London: Sells Ltd., 1914), pp. 92-93.



trade of the prairies. As the Winnipeg firm was deeply involved in the export of cattle, it preferred to buy big four-year-old steers.<sup>25</sup> On the other hand, Burns was not so deeply involved in the export trade, and calves, cows, and younger steers were, to a large degree, suitable for his wholesale and retail business.<sup>26</sup> For many years the packing houses of the two firms were far enough apart to reduce competition in the buying areas which supplied their respective plants. In addition, Gordon, Ironside and Fares had no retail outlets which would have created a demand for the types of animals Burns required. Competition between the two firms was undoubtedly increased when P. Burns and Co. made its first major efforts to establish itself in the provinces east of Alberta during World War I. The Beef Commission expressed the view that the different demands of the two firms was advantageous to stock growers as there was a market for all types of cattle.<sup>27</sup>

In Western Canada, competition in the meat trade was increasing. In 1906, J.Y. Griffin and Company of Winnipeg and its branch establishments passed into the hands of the American firm of Swift and Company.<sup>28</sup> In Calgary, Griffin had just completed an addition to its facilities<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Calgary Daily News, June 25, 1907.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>Calgary Morning Albertan, December 27, 1907.

<sup>28</sup>Macleod Gazette, April 5, 1906; Calgary Morning Albertan, June 5, 1906.

<sup>29</sup>Calgary Morning Albertan, June 25, 1906.





which at that time appear to have consisted of a cold storage plant.<sup>30</sup> For some years the name of J.Y.Griffin and Company was retained by the Swift people for part of their Canadian operations.

In Edmonton's smaller neighbour, Strathcona, Burns was building an abattoir in the winter of 1906-07.<sup>31</sup> The abattoir was located on a tract of land on the east side of the Canadian Pacific Railway's tracks between what is now 63 and 68 Avenues.<sup>32</sup> Competitors in Strathcona were J. Gainer and Company, the Gallagher-Hull Meat and Packing Company, and the Vogel Meat and Packing Company.<sup>33</sup> Burns was already operating one retail store in Strathcona and one in Edmonton,<sup>34</sup> but whether these stores were established prior to 1905 has not been determined.

Late in 1907, the J.Y. Griffin Company began adding to its facilities in Edmonton.<sup>35</sup> The addition proved to be extensive indeed, for when it was finished in September, 1908, it was considered Edmon-

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<sup>30</sup>Calgary Daily News, June 13, 1908.

<sup>31</sup>Strathcona Plaindealer, January 4, 1907.

<sup>32</sup>Henderson's Edmonton and Strathcona Twin-City Directory 1908 (Winnipeg: Henderson Directories Ltd., 1908), p. 278.

<sup>33</sup>Strathcona Plaindealer, Christmas Number, December, 1904.

<sup>34</sup>Edmonton Town Topics - Christmas Number - 1905, an advertisement, page 16. (The booklet appears to be a publicity publication for Edmonton and district. The booklet is in the archives of the city of Edmonton).

<sup>35</sup>Strathcona Plaindealer, September 3, 1907.



ton's first modern packing plant.<sup>36</sup> E.F. Swift and Edward Tilden of Chicago were present for the opening ceremonies. In February, 1909, Burns hit back by purchasing Samuel Williamson's three retail stores<sup>37</sup> and arranging for the use of his abattoir.<sup>38</sup> The abattoir and other facilities were located in the block to the south-east of the intersection of Norwood Boulevard and Syndicate Street.<sup>39</sup> One newspaper said Burns' purchase was the first move in a "fight with Gallaxner-Hull, Swift and Gainer companies for the control of the western markets."<sup>40</sup>

A few days later, it was announced in Calgary that the business and entire holdings of the Dominion Meat Company had been bought by the Morris firm, a Canadian branch of Swift and Company.<sup>41</sup> The purchase gave the Morris firm possession of a big abattoir on Rose Creek and retail outlets in the prairies.<sup>42</sup> Earlier in the year a new

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<sup>36</sup>Strathcona Plaindealer, September 15, 1908. Actually at this time the plant was outside the city limits.

<sup>37</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, February 12, 1909. (The word "Calgary" was now included in the title of the paper).

<sup>38</sup>It would seem that Burns leased the abattoir. Interview Mr. G.H. Reuter of Edmonton, August 29, 1960. (Mr. Reuter was employed by Burns in Edmonton from 1907 until his retirement).

<sup>39</sup>Strathcona Plaindealer, Christmas Number, December, 1904.

<sup>40</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, February 12, 1909.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., February 24, 1909.

<sup>42</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, February 24, 1909. (An advertisement in the January 10, 1908, issue of the Calgary Daily News shows that the Dominion Meat Company had three retail outlets in Calgary. This firm appears to have been established in 1904. See Calgary Daily Herald, January 9, 1904).



firm, the Independent Meat and Packing Company, turned the first sod for a plant in Calgary.<sup>43</sup>

In British Columbia competition was also increasing. A new rival was the Vancouver, Prince Rupert Meat Company, Limited. The firm was organized in 1907 and began operations by buying out the retail business of P. Russell.<sup>44</sup> By the end of 1909, the firm was operating fourteen retail branches in Vancouver, New Westminster and Prince Rupert and had bought a ranch in Alberta.<sup>45</sup> Rather ironically, one of the directors and backers of the company was Thomas Ellis, the father-in-law of Pat Burns.<sup>46</sup> It is said that Burns and Ellis showed each other no quarter in their drive for business.<sup>47</sup>

In March, 1909, Burns strengthened his position when he bought the wholesale and retail business of Robert Porter and Sons of Vancouver for about \$300,000, and thereby gained two retail markets in Victoria and two in Vancouver.<sup>48</sup> The transaction increased the number of outlets Burns operated in Vancouver to eleven.<sup>49</sup> Again in 1909, Burns acquired an extensive business in Vernon and in other Okanagan

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<sup>43</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, January 17, 1908.

<sup>44</sup>Calgary Morning Albertan, May 22, 1907.

<sup>45</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, December 8, 1909.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid.

<sup>47</sup>Interview Mr. R.S. Tribe of the Okus district, August 23, 1956. (Mr. Tribe was an office employee of Burns).

<sup>48</sup>Victoria Daily Times, April 1, 1909.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid.





Valley centres.<sup>50</sup> As he continued to expand the number of his retail outlets in British Columbia, Vancouver and Vancouver Island received the most attention. By 1913, he operated fifteen markets in the Greater Vancouver area, eight markets in Victoria, and six at other points on Vancouver Island.<sup>51</sup> The new packing plant, which the Burns firm opened in Vancouver in 1907, was no doubt an important factor in making expansion in this area possible.

In 1910, the British Columbia Meat Company's abattoir at Lburne was sold to the J.Y. Griffin Company.<sup>52</sup> The purchase was reported as signaling "the first big step taken by the powerful Chicago house in an aggressive campaign for the control of the provincial wholesale and retail meat business in which the leaders at present are P. Burns & Co."<sup>53</sup> The Griffin Company operated cold storage plants at Nelson, Victoria and Vancouver.<sup>54</sup>

In 1910, Burns was having trouble in Edmonton. The operation of his Norwood Boulevard abattoir was considered objectionable.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>50</sup>Information contained in a prospectus of the firm in the files of the Companies Branch, Edmonton.

<sup>51</sup>Henderson's Greater Vancouver City Director for 1913, p. 117.

<sup>52</sup>Strathcona Plaindealer, July 12, 1910. (Lburne is very close to Vancouver).

<sup>53</sup>Strathcona Plaindealer, July 12, 1910. (The "Chicago House" was Swift and Company).

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., January 1, 1909.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., March 8, 1910.



Residential development in the neighbourhood probably brought complaints about the continuance of operations there. Burns was forced to consider locating his Edmonton slaughtering facilities elsewhere. He was able to carry on operations at his Strathcona abattoir, but undoubtedly the facilities there were taxed to the limit. In addition to the extra load of the Edmonton trade, Burns had taken over the business of the Vogel Meat and Packing Company about this time.<sup>56</sup> In 1911, he seriously considered building a large modern packing plant on the site of his Strathcona plant, and enlarged his holdings to forty-two acres for that purpose.<sup>57</sup> The plan was later abandoned and it was decided to build in Edmonton.

A look at the overall growth of Burns' business shows why an additional packing plant was needed. The supply of beef to railway construction camps was an important feature of the firm's trade between the years 1909 and 1915. The building of two new transcontinental railways was creating new markets. P. Burns and Company shipped cattle to Kaministikwia near Fort William. Then they were driven overland to the Algoma district where the Canadian Northern Railway was completing a gap in its line north of Lake Superior.<sup>58</sup> Michael Burns,

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<sup>56</sup>Interviews: Mr. L.B. Cameron of Edmonton, August 26, 1960; Mr. G.H. Reuter of Edmonton, August 29, 1960. (Both men are retired employees of the Edmonton staff).

<sup>57</sup>Strathcona Plaindealer, January 31, 1911; March 10, 1911; March 14, 1911.

<sup>58</sup>Interview Mr. R.S. Tribe of Olds, August 23, 1956. (Mr. Tribe was an office employee of Burns).



one of Pat's brothers, looked after details at that end.<sup>59</sup> There is also evidence that some of the requirements of the Canadian Northern during construction between Edmonton and Vancouver were met by the firm.<sup>60</sup>

The construction of the Grand Trunk Pacific between Edmonton and Prince Rupert also meant more meat contracts. Some of the meat supplies were handled from Edmonton,<sup>61</sup> but cattle were also trailed into the camps west of Edson.<sup>62</sup> During the construction of part of the line in British Columbia, cattle were driven north from Asncroft over the Cariboo Trail to Prince George, a distance of about three hundred miles.<sup>63</sup> George Denoon slaughtered the first cattle for the Burns firm in Prince Rupert.<sup>64</sup>

In southern British Columbia, Burns supplied the meat used during the extension of the Kettle Valley line between Hope and Penticton. Herb Clark was the man in charge of getting the cattle to the construction camps. Many of the cattle were procured in the ranching

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<sup>59</sup>Interview Mr. R.S. Tribe of Olds, August 23, 1956.

<sup>60</sup>Interview Mr. Herb Clark of Calgary, October 6, 1956. (Mr. Clark rode for Burns for several years. His belief about Canadian Northern contracts is judged to be confirmed by evidence presented in the next chapter).

<sup>61</sup>Interviews: Mr. L.B. Cameron of Edmonton, August 26, 1960; Mr. G.H. Reuter of Edmonton, August 29, 1960.

<sup>62</sup>Interview Mr. Herb Clark of Calgary, October 6, 1956. (Mr. Clark rode for Burns in these years).

<sup>63</sup>Interview Mr. Clark, October 6, 1956.

<sup>64</sup>Clipping in the Calgary Public Library dated February 22, 1949.





country around Merrit, B.C. Oxen were used to lead the way for the cattle on the difficult drives through the rugged country to the camp sites. At each construction camp a tripod was erected and butchering took place.<sup>65</sup> Other meat contracts are said to have been held for railway projects in Oregon and Washington<sup>66</sup> and it is probable that Burns had some meat contracts for the many feeder lines being constructed on the Canadian prairies.

Immigration to Canada in these years was reaching record numbers. The growth in population was reflected in the expansion of Burns' wholesale and retail trade. In 1911 he had "seventy-six distributing houses and retail stores throughout British Columbia and Alberta"<sup>67</sup> and a few in the Yukon. In 1912, it was reported that it took fifty thousand carcasses to supply the yearly demands of his butcher shops and that between twenty thousand and thirty thousand head of cattle were exported yearly.<sup>68</sup> The number of hogs, sheep, fowl and fish required for his trade receive no mention. In respect to the export trade, branch offices had been operating in London and Liverpool

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<sup>65</sup>Interview Mr. Clark, October 6, 1956.

<sup>66</sup>Interview Mr. R.S. Tribe of Olds, August 23, 1956.

<sup>67</sup>"Ranching in Alberta" Okotoks Advance, May 11, 1911.  
(Reprint from the Montreal Standard).

<sup>68</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, September 6, 1912.  
(Special Section).



for some time.<sup>69</sup> In 1912, or earlier, a sales representative was stationed at Paris.<sup>70</sup> Provisioning ships plying the Pacific Ocean was also a part of his expanding operations.<sup>71</sup>

In addition to the trends in Burns' business just recounted, the situation in the northern part of Alberta favoured the construction of a large packing plant at Edmonton. Between 1901 and 1911 the population of the city increased from 2,626 to 24,900.<sup>72</sup> In the same period the population of Alberta increased from 73,022 to 374,663<sup>73</sup> with much of that increase in the northern districts. The development of northern centres meant an increased demand for meat products as well as an increased supply of livestock in the rural districts. Edmonton was now served by the two new transcontinental railways. The Canadian Northern reached Edmonton in 1905 and the Grand Trunk Pacific in 1909. By 1911, both lines were being built westward to the Coast. At this time, companies such as the Edmonton and Slave Lake Railway, the Alberta and Great Waterways Railway, the Edmonton, Dunvegan and British Columbia Railway, and others were either constructing or

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<sup>69</sup>Information obtained from typewritten notes compiled by Mr. John J. Tighe of Calgary, a long-time employee of Burns. See p. 32 of notes. (Hereinafter referred to as "Tighe's notes").

<sup>70</sup>Calgary Morning Albertan, November 22, 1918.

<sup>71</sup>Interview Mr. L.B. Cameron of Edmonton, August 26, 1960. (Mr. Cameron, a retired employee, began his service with Burns in Vancouver).

<sup>72</sup>The Canada Year Book 1911 (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1912), p. 7.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., p. 2.



planning to construct feeder lines into the country surrounding Edmonton. The construction of these railways promised to bring new villages and towns into existence where Burns might establish retail outlets. A modern packing plant in Edmonton would ease the pressure on his other plants, and in particular on his abattoir at Strathcona. In addition, the facilities of the new Swift plant would have to be matched if he hoped to compete effectively with that rival.

The construction of Burns' Edmonton<sup>74</sup> packing plant began in September, 1911, on a thirty acre site served by both the Grand Trunk Pacific and the Canadian Northern railways.<sup>75</sup> The six storey building covered a ground space of 100 by 120 feet and cost approximately half a million dollars. The power plant, fertilizer storage, ice storage, warehouse, barn, stock pens, and cattle, hog and sheep sheds added about another one-quarter million dollars to the cost. The plant was designed to handle three hundred beeves and one thousand hogs per day and a staff of over two hundred men were required for its operation. The management of the Edmonton branch was under the direction of Mr. William Donald.<sup>76</sup> The Strathcona abattoir was closed after the new plant opened.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>74</sup>Actually the plant was located in the village of North Edmonton which was later amalgamated with Edmonton. The plant is adjacent to the intersection of 120 Avenue and 72 Street.

<sup>75</sup>Edmonton Journal, September 26, 1911.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., Tenth Anniversary Number, 1913, p. 51.

<sup>77</sup>Interview Mr. G.H. Reuter of Edmonton, August 29, 1960. (A retired employee of the firm).





During 1912, Burns made his position more secure in Calgary by buying the small plant of the Dominion Meat Company on Nose Creek.<sup>78</sup> The Dominion Meat Company was a branch of Morris and Company of Chicago.<sup>79</sup> As the Chicago firm had announced plans to build a large packing plant in the Nose Creek area in 1911,<sup>80</sup> the transaction would appear to have been based on an agreement that the Morris company abandon the project.

If the full story of the struggle among the various packing house companies for the Western Canadian market could be learned, it would provide some interesting details. For example, in 1910 Burns suspended construction on the large P. Burns Building on the south-west corner of Eighth Avenue and Second Street East in Calgary in order to pour more money into his ranching and packing house empire.<sup>81</sup> The office building was not essential for the firm's immediate plans and only a portion of it was intended for its own use. That very year Burns had ended office operations at various down-town locations when a two storey building was opened on the site of the packing plant in East Calgary.<sup>82</sup>

In 1912, one newspaper, seemingly referring to the activities

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<sup>78</sup>A news letter dated June 30, 1955, in the Provincial Library, Edmonton.

<sup>79</sup>ibid.

<sup>80</sup>Strathcona Plaindealer, May 16, 1911.

<sup>81</sup>Interview Mr. P.S. Bossard of Calgary, August 28, 1956. (A former employee of Burns).

<sup>82</sup>Interview Mr. R.S. Tribe of Olds, August 23, 1956. (Mr. Tribe worked in the Burns offices).



of Burns' American competitors, stated:

Pat Burns, the Canadian beef king who knows the business from a peddler's cart all the way up, never knew his popularity until the beef trust got after him. The West will stay by our own Burns and he will call the bluff of fifty millionaires.<sup>83</sup>

To attempt to enlarge on the implications of this news item would be chiefly speculation but as the Burns firm continued to thrive in the years that followed, it is obvious that the threat was overcome. The remarks of the paper reveal that Patrick Burns, the self-made man of Alberta, had not created a legacy of envy and distrust in his climb to success.

Burns' business policies would seem to have commanded more respect than those of some of his competitors. One feature of his trade was the supply of meat to logging and mining companies in the Crow's Nest Pass region. Contracts were made once a year to run for twelve months, based on the estimated cost of livestock during that time. One year, a representative of the Burns firm, William Shaw, visited thirteen companies in the Crow's Nest to arrange for meat contracts. Each company official wanted to know whether the prices Shaw quoted were the same as those offered to the other mining and logging concerns. On being assured that this was the case, twelve of the thirteen companies signed contracts. The thirteenth company demanded a concession of one-quarter cent a pound because an American firm had offered rates giving that saving. Refusal to break the price schedule for the thir-

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<sup>83</sup>Okotoks Advance, March 21, 1912.



teenth company lost Burns a good contract, but there were favourable results.

The other companies seemed more impressed by the faith shown by Burns in treating them all equally than in the saving the other firm had with its contract. They did not ask Burns to match the American firm's price. During the year, cattle prices dropped unexpectedly and Burns voluntarily reduced the price agreed on by two cents a pound. The American firm failed to follow suit, and the next year Company No. Thirteen asked for a contract with Burns.<sup>84</sup>

In 1913, Burns received a severe but temporary setback to his packing operations in Calgary. On Sunday, January 12, a watchman discovered that fire had broken out in the basement of a frame warehouse.<sup>85</sup> The fire, the largest in Calgary to that time, was fought in below zero temperatures for about three days.<sup>86</sup> Fire fighting efforts were hindered by insufficient water pressure and by partially frozen fire hydrants.<sup>87</sup> The warehouse and the cold storage building were destroyed but the abattoir and other facilities were saved.<sup>88</sup> About four thousand carcasses of beef, several thousand carcasses of sheen, and quantities of cured meats, eggs, and poultry were lost.<sup>89</sup> An estimate

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<sup>84</sup>Tighe's Notes, pp. 12-13.

<sup>85</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, January 13, 1913.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., January 14, 1913.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., January 13, 1913; January 14, 1913.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., January 13, 1913.





of the damage approached the one million dollar mark; however, the loss was covered by insurance.<sup>90</sup>

Patrick Burns was at his boyhood home in Ontario when the fire broke out, but he immediately left by train for Calgary, arriving there on the morning of January 18.<sup>91</sup> Interviewed at Winnipeg, he stated that he was particularly pleased that no lives had been lost, that the problem of meat supply could be met, and that there would be no shortage of work for the men in Calgary while the facilities were being rebuilt.<sup>92</sup>

Despite difficulties, the resources of the firm were able to cope with the emergency. Arrangements were made to secure cold storage facilities elsewhere in Calgary, and the Vancouver plant<sup>93</sup> and the almost completed Edmonton plant were mobilized to meet the situation.<sup>94</sup> With nearly twenty-five thousand cattle being fattened on the company's winter feeding stations,<sup>95</sup> Burns anticipated no rise in meat prices, but toward the end of January, higher retail prices did result because higher prices had to be paid for the cattle that were bought to replace the carcasses lost in the fire.<sup>96</sup> During 1913, the building's

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<sup>90</sup>Calgary Daily Herald: January 13, 1913; January 14, 1913.

<sup>91</sup>Morning Albertan, January 18, 1913.

<sup>92</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, January 17, 1913.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid., January 18, 1913.

<sup>94</sup>Edmonton Journal, January 13, 1913.

<sup>95</sup>Morning Albertan, January 18, 1913.

<sup>96</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, January 20, 1913.



of the Calgary plant were reconstructed on a larger scale with particular attention being paid to fireproofing the buildings.<sup>97</sup>

Earlier in this work, an article by F.F. Black, an executive of the Burns firm, was quoted to show that William Mackenzie, one of Canada's foremost railway builders, advanced money to Burns to help him develop his business.<sup>98</sup> A return to Black's article at this point reveals that as a consequence of the loans a most disturbing situation had to be faced by Burns.

Many years afterwards the reckoning for those advances came in. Burns thought they could be discharged by a payment of principal and interest. The railway magnate, who now had a title prefixed to his name, claimed that, by those advances he had bought a substantial interest in all the property -- real and personal -- belonging to Burns. On the basis of his contention the dispute was finally settled.<sup>99</sup>

Information in the files of the Companies Branch in Edmonton clarifies the relationship between William Mackenzie and Patrick Burns. On September 7, 1905, the Secretary of State granted a Dominion Charter to P. Burns & Co. Limited for the purpose of taking over the business of P. Burns & Co. The next step was to submit the details of the transfer to the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies for Alberta in order to obtain a license as an extra-Provincial Company. Correspondence between the Registrar and P. Burns & Co. shows that the

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<sup>97</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, January 18, 1913.

<sup>98</sup>See page 64.

<sup>99</sup>Francis Hollison Black, "Patrick Burns as I Knew Him", (A clipping in the Calgary Public Library dated March 27, 1937. The source cannot be identified).



latter encountered difficulty in working out the details of the transfer to P. Burns & Co. Limited. The actual transfer of the business was effected on September 30, 1908, and after the passage of certain by-laws by the new company the following spring, P. Burns & Co. Limited was registered as a joint-stock company in the Province of Alberta on October 26, 1909.<sup>100</sup>

One can speculate that the four year delay in completing the transfer may have been due, in part, to Mackenzie's insistence that through his previous financial advances to Burns "he had bought a substantial interest in all the property". It is significant to note that on March 30, 1909, By-Law No. 3 (A) and By-Law No. 4 of the new firm were signed by Mackenzie as Vice-President.<sup>101</sup>

The ownership and distribution of the capital shares of the new firm were first reported for the year ending December 31, 1911. At that time the capitalization of the company was \$3,000,000 divided into 30,000 shares at a value of \$100 each. The shareholders and distribution of shares were as follows: Patrick Burns: 16,494; Sir William Mackenzie: 10,000; W.J. "Blake" Wilson: 2,000; Dominic Burns: 1,500; John Burns: 2; C.J. Duggan: 2; Joseph Mackenzie: 2.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>100</sup>The information in this paragraph has been pieced together from a jig-saw of material in the files of the Companies Branch in Edmonton.

<sup>101</sup>A document in the files of the Companies Branch, Edmonton, dated March 30, 1909.

<sup>102</sup>A document in the files of the Companies Branch, Edmonton, dated December 31, 1911. (William Mackenzie was initiated in 1911. Since Black's article indicates the settlement with Burns was reached





The 16,494 shares held by Patrick Burns represented 54.78 per cent of the total shares issued while those held by Sir William Mackenzie represented 33.33 per cent of the total shares issued. Unless the number of shares held by Sir William Mackenzie was substantially different in the two years prior to this tabulation, it would seem that the financial advances he made to Burns in the earlier years were such that he was able to get a one-third interest in the firm.

The December 31, 1911 report lists the directors of P. Burns & Co. Limited as follows: Patrick Burns, Dominic Burns, W.J. Wilson, Sir William Mackenzie, and Joseph Mackenzie.<sup>103</sup> Elsewhere Patrick Burns is listed as President, F.M. Black as Treasurer, and A.J. Mitchell as Secretary. The addresses of Sir William Mackenzie, Joseph Mackenzie, and A. J. Mitchell are all given as "C/O Canadian Northern Railway, Toronto".<sup>104</sup> The common address and the likelihood that the Mackenzies were relatives suggest that the presence of the three men among the officers of the Burns firm was part of the overall settlement.

The only other document in the files of the Companies Branch that lists the shareholders and the distribution of the capital shares

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 after Mackenzie received his knighthood, the discussion of the matter seems to have its place in the latter part of this chapter).

<sup>103</sup>A document in the files of the Companies Branch, Edmonton, dated December 31, 1911.

<sup>104</sup>A document in the files of the Companies Branch, Edmonton, for the year ending 1911.



of P. Burns & Co. Limited dates September 30, 1919. At that time, 40,000 shares valued at \$100 each had been issued. Patrick Burns held 21,840 shares or 54.60 per cent of the total issued and Sir William Mackenzie held 14,900 shares or 37.25 per cent of the total shares issued. Sir William was still a director, but Joseph Mackenzie was no longer a shareholder or director, and A.J. Mitchell was no longer the Secretary. At this time none of the other directors or officers of the firm would appear to have any ties to Sir William Mackenzie. A point of deep significance in that it must reflect the attitude of Burns in the conduct of his business is the statement, "No shares of the Company are or have been offered for public subscription".<sup>105</sup>

It seems certain that Sir William Mackenzie still had an interest in P. Burns & Co. Limited at the time of his death in 1923, for one of his heirs periodically received sums of money from the firm for the next few years.<sup>106</sup>

It is difficult to pass judgment or to take sides in the issue that developed between Burns and Mackenzie. Information from sources other than those used is of the barest nature.<sup>107</sup> The various other

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<sup>105</sup>A document in the files of the Companies Branch, Edmonton, dated September 30, 1919.

<sup>106</sup>Interview Mr. J. Howard Kelly of Calgary, August 1, 1956. (Mr. Kelly, now President of Burns & Co. Limited, was in the service of the firm in the 1920's).

<sup>107</sup>Black's review of the struggle between Burns and Mackenzie has never been related to the writer by any of the people he has interviewed. This is understandable for none of these people were in a position to know the innermost problems of the firm at that time. Nevertheless, the following individuals recall that Mackenzie had some



difficulties which faced both Burns and Mackenzie at this time in their careers could be a factor in the lack of publicity. It is possible that the competitors of either man could have found a way to exploit the situation to their advantage. Black's commentary, although it may be biased in favour of Burns, must provide the summation of the whole situation.

Apparently no documents ever had been signed. Each was satisfied -- at the time -- that the other would do the right thing. It was characteristic of Burns that, when the bitterness of the unexpected blow had passed, he seldom referred to it. Resentment had no place in his life.

But, while the connection lasted, it had been of great value. Whenever, in his optimism, he had run farther ahead than was wise and he was in danger of grounding in financial shallows, he could afford to wait, secure in the conviction that his ship would float again on the next tide of national development; or that, as a last resort, 'Mackenzie could be resorted to'.<sup>108</sup>

In the period between 1907 and 1913, Burns had many business difficulties which in one way or another he surmounted. In his personal life the situation was not as happy. Toward the end of this period his wife left him. She resided in California for a time and then moved to Victoria where her husband provided her with a home.<sup>109</sup>

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kind of interest in the company. Mr. J. Howard Kelly, now President of Burns & Co. Limited, stated in an interview on August 1, 1956, that Mackenzie had a "forced interest" in P. Burns & Co. Limited. Mrs. A.C. Sparrow, a niece of P. Burns, stated in an interview at Calgary on July 19, 1956, that Mackenzie had an "interest" in the business. Mr. Chris Bartsch, an employee of Burns for several years after the turn of this century, mentioned Mackenzie's "interest" in the firm during an interview at Calgary on July 7, 1956.

<sup>108</sup>Black, op. cit.

<sup>109</sup>Interview Miss Kathleen Ellis of Penticton, B.C., August 18, 1955. (A sister of Mrs. Burns).





A reconciliation took place in 1922 but Mrs. Burns had contracted cancer and had but a short while left to live. In the last interval, she and her husband spent some time together at their pleasant Bow Valley Ranch south of Calgary.<sup>110</sup>

Mrs. Burns died on September 7, 1923, a month before she would have celebrated her fiftieth birthday. The final two months of her life were spent in the Vancouver General Hospital where the superintendent of nursing was her sister, Miss Kathleen Ellis. When her condition rapidly became worse, her husband, who had been in Winnipeg, left for Vancouver but did not arrive until after her death.<sup>111</sup> In her memory he presented a group of three stained glass windows to the Cathedral Church of the Redeemer in Calgary.<sup>112</sup>

The circumstances which led to the separation of Mr. and Mrs. Burns were never made public. Although she was a member of the Church of England, and he was a Roman Catholic, religion was not an issue in their marriage.<sup>113</sup> In the opinion of a relative, Patrick Burns' devotion to his business affairs was the chief cause of the rift.<sup>114</sup> His

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<sup>110</sup>Interview Mr. Edward Hoschka of Calgary, March 3, 1950. (Mr. Hoschka was the foreman of the Bow Valley Ranch at this time).

<sup>111</sup>Vancouver Province, September 7, 1923. (The paper errs in saying that Mrs. Burns was 51 years of age).

<sup>112</sup>The writer has observed these windows.

<sup>113</sup>Interview Miss Kathleen Ellis of Penticton, B.C., August 18, 1955.

<sup>114</sup>Interview Mr. R.J. Burns of Calgary, August 30, 1961. (A grand-nephew of P. Burns).



business day was never finished, his business trips never ending, his preoccupation with business affairs too complete. He had his rewards, but a successful marriage was not one of them.



## CHAPTER VI

### RANCH EXPANSION (1908-1913)

The winter of 1906-1907 was the most severe the stockmen of the prairies had ever experienced. Winter began on November 14, 1906 and the temperature remained below zero until February 24, 1907.<sup>1</sup> Even after that date intermittent cold weather continued. In May, a temperature of fifteen degrees below zero was registered.<sup>2</sup> Generally, the ranchers were caught unprepared to combat such adverse conditions. Heavy falls of snow and driving blizzards hampered efforts to get feed to the cattle and the deep hard-crusting snow prevented the animals from reaching the grass beneath the snow. Estimates of the losses vary but it would seem that upwards to fifty per cent of the range cattle died that winter.<sup>3</sup>

The situation was a catastrophe for many cattlemen. Some were ruined, many decided to abandon ranching, and a great number were forced to sell a portion of what remained of their breeding stock to remain solvent. It has been recorded that Burns was more fortunate than others because a large number of his cattle were big mature steers that could withstand the rigours of the winter.<sup>4</sup> One of his herds, consisting

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<sup>1</sup>Lethbridge Herald, February 25, 1937, p. 18.

<sup>2</sup>Edward Wood, "The Mormon Church and Cochrane Ranch" Canadian Cattlemen (Vol. 8, No. 3, December, 1945), p. 128.

<sup>3</sup>Macleod Advance, March 17, 1908.

<sup>4</sup>L.V. Kelly, The Range Men (Toronto: Wm. Briggs, 1913), p. 377.





of twenty-one hundred steers, was caught on the range near Strathmore when the fall storms came.

Five men, Walter Wake, Justin Freeman, Leonard Gates, Ellis, and Chadwick went out and collected 1,600 head taking them to Burns' great feeding stations east of Crossfield. The remainder of the herd was rounded up in the spring, and, though poor, had survived the winter in remarkable style.<sup>5</sup>

Perhaps the winter of 1906-07 was the time Pat Burns "came to the help of his fellow ranchers and pooled all his available feed supplies thus reducing the losses of cattle."<sup>6</sup>

The winter was such a blow to the ranching industry that one of Burns' chief concerns was that the supply of cattle would remain at an adequate level.<sup>7</sup> To some extent the winter disrupted what might have been a more orderly transition from farming to ranching. Burns' former view that the farmers would provide the required cattle<sup>8</sup> was not realized. In addition, the attractive price of wheat made land that was suitable for crops too valuable to keep in grass. In 1909, Burns warned the farmers and ranchers of Alberta of what might happen.

Dazzled by dollar wheat, many farmers are now selling their stock to make room for more wheat. Therein lies the danger of which Mr. Burns gives warning.... In the interests of farmers, Mr. Burns says, 'Keep your

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<sup>5</sup>Kelly, op. cit., p. 379.

<sup>6</sup>Calgary Albertan, March 2, 1937, p. 9.

<sup>7</sup>Strathcona Plaindealer, November 29, 1907.

<sup>8</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, October 5, 1905.



cows for breeding. We are today shipping cattle which should be kept at home. If stock are thus depleted, in three years' time we will be forced to import beef into Alberta.'

Mr. Burns' warning by no means implies that farmers should return to the days of ranching, when the brand of a firm appeared on the flanks of ten thousand cattle. It is merely that they begin, or continue, stock raising systematically. 'It is not wise,' Mr. Burns says, 'for a farmer to put all his land into wheat or root crops.'.... 'beef cattle are not raised in one nor in two years, and preparations must now be made for the supply of beef in 1912 and succeeding years.'... 'I have no hesitation in stating that we shall feel very keenly the shortage of beef cattle during the next few years, and that we must look for much higher prices for cattle and beef'.<sup>9</sup>

In 1911 and 1912, the predicted shortage of cattle occurred.<sup>10</sup>

The situation was possibly in part caused by the lifting of the embargo on Canadian cattle by the United States in 1911.<sup>11</sup> Some Alberta ranchers sent shipments to the United States where higher prices prevailed.<sup>12</sup> In the summer of 1911 cattle and dressed beef were actually imported by Alberta.<sup>13</sup> In Calgary, prime steers were bringing from \$90 to \$115 per head, an increase of over one hundred per cent over prices paid three or four years earlier.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, August 10, 1909. (Burns repeated his warning in 1910. See: Strathcona Plaindealer, May 13, 1910; The Macleod Advertiser, December 22, 1910).

<sup>10</sup>Kelly, op. cit., p. 427.

<sup>11</sup>I.A. Coles and A.J. Charnetski, "Gov't Brought In First Cattle Herd to Alberta for Indians in '79", Calgary Herald, July 8, 1950. (The authors are officials of the Alberta Department of Agriculture).

<sup>12</sup>The Macleod Spectator, December 3, 1912.

<sup>13</sup>Canadian Cattlemen, (Vol. 1, No. 1, June, 1938), p. 41.

<sup>14</sup>The Macleod Advertiser, January 30, 1913.





In addition to his warnings, Burns tried to counteract the shortage of cattle. Between 1907 and 1913 he secured more ranching properties. The lands he obtained were usually on the market for two reasons: the general disillusionment with ranching, and the unattractiveness of the lands for grain production.

By a general amalgamation of several properties south-west of Milk River, Alberta, he created a huge ranch known as the "Colonel Mackie" or the "Mackie Lease". It would seem that Burns had some property in the Milk River District in 1908<sup>15</sup> or as early as 1906.<sup>16</sup> In March, 1910, he secured a lease of approximately three and one-half townships held by A. T. Mackie of Pembroke, Ontario.<sup>17</sup> It may be that Burns had an arrangement to use the Mackie lease prior to the date of the official transfer,<sup>18</sup> but in any case his total holdings in the area were now nearly six and one-half townships, or about 150,000 acres.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Interview Mr. John Glendenning of Nanton, Alberta, October 6, 1956. (Mr. Glendenning was a cattle buyer for Burns in the early 1900's).

<sup>16</sup>Correspondence with Alice A. Campbell, Milk River, Alberta. (Mrs. Campbell has compiled historical information on the district).

<sup>17</sup>Information supplied by the office of the Dominion Archivist. (In 1901, Mackie secured a lease on the Dominion lands in Township 2, Range 18, and that part of Township 2, Range 19, lying south of the Milk River, West of the 4th Meridian. In 1902, Mackie secured a lease on the Dominion lands in Township 1, Range 18, and in Township 1, Range 19, West of the 4th Meridian).

<sup>18</sup>An interpretation that arises from correspondence with Mrs. A.C. Campbell of Milk River, Alberta.

<sup>19</sup>Kelly, op. cit., p. 52. (Mrs. A.C. Campbell of Milk River states that the 150,000 acres consisted of the following townships





The southern limits of the amalgamated properties stretched for eighteen miles along the International Boundary and in part, the north-south sweep of the lands also extended eighteen miles. The chief buildings of the consolidated properties were those located near what is called "The Forks", a juncture of the two branches of the Milk River.<sup>20</sup> These buildings had been erected by Colonel Mackie but neither he nor his family had taken permanent residence in Alberta.<sup>21</sup> The Mackie brand, a y on the left rib, was transferred to Burns when he obtained the lease and was used on his cattle in this area.<sup>22</sup>

Guy Pallister, a towering man, was the foreman of the Milk River properties during most of the period Burns operated there. He ran about 7,000 cattle on the 150,000 acres and the town of Milk River was his shipping point.<sup>23</sup> As the ranch was located in the more arid region of southern Alberta, the number of cattle fluctuated, particularly when there was difficulty in securing sufficient fodder for winter feeding.<sup>24</sup>

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West of the 4th Meridian: Townships 1 and 2 in Range 17; Townships 1, 2, and 3 in Range 18; Township 1 and that part of Township 2 lying south of the Milk River in Range 19).

<sup>20</sup>Correspondence with Mrs. A.C. Campbell of Milk River, Alberta.

<sup>21</sup>Correspondence with Mrs. A.C. Campbell of Milk River, Alberta.

<sup>22</sup>Interview with the late Guy Pallister of Turner Valley, August 21, 1956. (Mr. Pallister was foreman of the Mackie Ranch for many years).

<sup>23</sup>Interview Mr. Pallister of Turner Valley, August 21, 1956.

<sup>24</sup>Interview Mr. Pallister of Turner Valley, August 21, 1956.



Evidence suggests that Burns transferred parts of the original Mackie leases to Meek Brothers, R.C. Harvey, and the Raymond Pool Company in 1917, retaining but one township.<sup>25</sup> When and to whom Burns transferred the remaining township of the original Mackie lease, and what happened to the other adjacent leases has not been determined, but it would appear that Burns terminated his Milk River operations about 1920.<sup>26</sup>

In the summer of 1908, Burns secured control of an 8,000 acre tract of grazing land on the estuary of the Fraser River near Ladner.<sup>27</sup> Lacking further details it may be assumed that since the land was reasonably close to Vancouver, it was obtained to complement operations at the packing plant. Cattle bought elsewhere could have been sent to this pasture for further conditioning prior to slaughter.

In Alberta, Burns secured another group of properties which he was eventually able to integrate into one grazing unit.<sup>28</sup> The pro-

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<sup>25</sup>Information supplied by the office of the Dominion Archivist.

<sup>26</sup>Interview Mr. Pallister of Turner Valley, August 21, 1956. (Mr. Pallister was of a very advanced age at the time of the interview and hesitated to rely on his memory. It may be assumed that the leases Burns held adjacent to the original Mackie leases were to a large part gradually taken over for agricultural settlement).

<sup>27</sup>Information supplied by the Provincial Library, Victoria, B.C. (The librarian stated that the information was taken from a June, 1908 item of the Vancouver Province. In an interview on August 17, 1962, Mr. R.J. Burns of Calgary, a grandnephew of P. Burns, stated that the property was held by Dominic Burns, a brother of Patrick Burns).

<sup>28</sup>Information supplied by the office of the Dominion Archivist.





perties stretched in an irregular way from near what is now the north-eastern shore of Lake McGregor<sup>28</sup> eastward to the Bow River. Mr. Douglas Hardwick who ranched in this vicinity was instrumental in arousing Burns' interest in much of the land. Mr. Hardwick does not recall the exact year when Burns took up the first of his leases but suggests it was in 1907 or 1908.<sup>30</sup> He does, however, vividly remember the day when Pat Burns and "Con" Duggan, manager of the ranches, came to look the situation over.

Duggan and Hardwick were out driving through the property when the harness on the horses broke and the team bolted down a hill. Hardwick shouted to Duggan to jump clear and jumped himself. Duggan, a man of sterner fibre, did not budge but ended up safely when the team careened to where Burns was waiting and promptly stopped.<sup>31</sup>

Con Duggan was skeptical about the lease in question, particularly the matter of fencing it. When Hardwick mentioned this to Burns, Burns told him not to worry as he would look after the matter. In the evening Burns casually broached the subject by asking Duggan how many fence posts they had in their supplies. Duggan, of course, was able to tell him. Then Burns wondered where his fencing crew was presently working. Duggan had the answer. Next, Pat asked Duggan to

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<sup>29</sup>Lake McGregor is an artificial body of water created for an irrigation project. Milo is located near the north-eastern shore of this lake.

<sup>30</sup>Interview Mr. Douglas Hardwick of Calgary, July 7, 1956.

<sup>31</sup>Interview Mr. Douglas Hardwick of Calgary, July 7, 1956.





what railway point they should ship the posts. Duggan decided that Bassano would be the best place. The conversation continued with Burns speculating on how high the fence should be, how many strands of wire should be used, the cost, and so on. Con Duggan came up with all the answers. In a short time Mr. Hardwick realized that the deal was "O.K."<sup>32</sup>

Evidence supplied by the office of the Dominion archivist shows that Burns secured four properties in the area hitherto described. The date, 1910, is given for the acquisition of the smallest. The total acreage amounted to 71,083 acres. A legal description of the lands would be very complicated as the boundaries of the various properties were irregular.<sup>33</sup> The legal description of one of the four properties, a tract of 6,083 acres, is not available.

In departmental records the integrated properties were known as the "Kelly and Palmer Ranch",<sup>34</sup> a name apparently used no where else. The property supported between 2,500 and 4,000 cattle and from 400 to 500 horses.<sup>35</sup> In relation to the acreage, the number of animals

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<sup>32</sup>Interview Mr. Douglas Hardwick of Calgary, July 7, 1956.

<sup>33</sup>In general, the properties included the bulk of Township 18 in Range 19 and Township 18 in Range 20; much of the northern and eastern part of Township 18 in Range 21; a considerable portion of the western and southern parts of Township 19 in Range 19; a narrow strip in the southern part of Township 19 in Range 18; and a small portion of the north-east corner of Township 18 in Range 18; all properties lying west of the Fourth Meridian.

<sup>34</sup>Information supplied by the office of the Dominion Archivist.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.



pastured was rather low. The reason for this situation was the arid nature of the country and the lack of winter fodder. In 1917, Burns disposed of the Kelly and Palmer Ranch.<sup>36</sup>

Men who were in Burns' employment use the term "The Blackfoot" in recounting their experiences in the general vicinity of the Kelly and Palmer Ranch.<sup>37</sup> It would seem that before the Blackfoot Indian Reservation disposed of part of its lands, some of Burns' property may have abutted the southern boundary of the Reserve. Indeed, remarks by former riders for Burns indicate that he worked out an informal understanding with the Indians to compensate them for his cattle grazing on parts of the Blackfoot Reserve south of the Bow River. From time to time the gift of a steer to the Indians preserved satisfactory relations.<sup>38</sup>

A discussion of Burns' holdings south of the Blackfoot Indian Reservation raises the matter of his elusive "10 Horse Ranch". A number of old timers recall visiting or hearing of the 10 Horse Ranch but there is no general agreement as to its size, location or duration. It seems likely that the name was loosely applied to whatever lease or

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<sup>36</sup>Information supplied by the office of the Dominion Archivist.

<sup>37</sup>Interviews: Phil S. Bossard of Calgary, August 28, 1956; E.J. Cotton of Calgary, August 26, 1956. (The writer is not entirely satisfied that the term "The Blackfoot" can be properly substituted for the Kelly and Palmer Ranch).

<sup>38</sup>Interviews: Phil S. Bossard of Calgary, August 28, 1956; E.J. Cotton of Calgary, August 26, 1956. (Although it has been suggested that Burns had a formal lease to graze cattle on part of the Blackfoot Reservation, correspondence with government departments has not verified this belief).





deeded property on which Burns was running his "10" branded horses at some particular time. In Herb Clark's experience, the ranch lay south of the Blackfoot Reserve, for he was employed on it as a professional horse breaker in 1910 and at later intervals. Eddie Franklin, an outstanding horseman in his day, was the foreman. At an earlier time, a man by the name of Walker held the job. Clark believes the ranch was created from some three sections of land bought from Charlie Parks and four sections purchased from two bankers a few years prior to 1910. There was leased land adjoining. Burns had around three hundred horses on the ranch in 1910 and Clark broke a number of them to be used on the meat wagons supplying retail stores in large centres. The ranch was also the centre from which saddle horses were drawn to serve on Burns' various ranches. Clark thinks the 10 Horse Ranch was sold when the adjoining lease expired around 1918.<sup>39</sup>

The move into the area south of the Blackfoot Reservation was mainly a consequence of the agricultural development of the lands lying on the north side of the Bow River. Much of the land stretching in a great arc north of the river was held by the Canadian Pacific Railway,

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<sup>39</sup>Interview Mr. Herb Clark of Calgary, October 6, 1956. (It should be pointed out that unless one has a somewhat accurate description of deeded property there is little chance that a land titles office can undertake the job of furnishing the desired information. In regard to leases, the writer has been informed by the Department of Northern Affairs and Natural Resources that after the transfer of Dominion Lands to the Province in 1930 a great many of the inactive files pertaining to the early years were destroyed. The writer has gained the impression that provincial authorities take little interest in preserving their old records and if they do preserve them it is in an unsystematic way).





but for years Burns had been allowed to pasture herds there. However, when the railway opened the lands to settlement and an irrigation project was started, Burns gradually had to withdraw his cattle to other locations.<sup>40</sup>

In 1910, Burns secured a grazing lease known as the "Imperial Ranch", the buildings of which lay on the north-west slope of Gopher Head Hill about thirty miles north and slightly east of Drumheller, Alberta. If one includes Hudson's Bay Lands and School Lands, Burns' lease comprised slightly over 48,000 acres.<sup>41</sup> The property included all of Township 33 in Range 19; all of Township 34 in Range 19, with the exception of six sections in the north-west corner; nine sections in the north-east corner of Township 33 in Range 18; all townships being West of Meridian Four.<sup>42</sup>

The previous owners, Mr. Thomas Dahl of Sturgeon Creek, Manitoba, and a Mr. Alexander of Winnipeg organized the Imperial Cattle Ranches of Alberta, Ltd. in 1906,<sup>43</sup> but Thomas Dahl and one D.C. Cameron had secured the lease in 1905.<sup>44</sup> Prior to Burns' tenure, the lease

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<sup>40</sup>Interviews: Phil S. Bossard of Calgary, August 28, 1956; E.J. Cotton of Calgary, August 26, 1956. (Both men rode for Burns during this period).

<sup>41</sup>Information supplied by the office of the Dominion Archivist. (L.V.Kelly in his book, The Range Men, erroneously states that the ranch consisted of 5,000 acres. See p.52).

<sup>42</sup>Information supplied by the office of the Dominion Archivist.

<sup>43</sup>Correspondence with J.A. Walters of Creston, B.C. (He later owned part of the ranch).

<sup>44</sup>Information supplied by the office of the Dominion Archivist.



contained about 88,000 acres, but land was taken out for agricultural purposes at the time the property was transferred.<sup>45</sup> The short life of the Imperial Cattle Ranches of Alberta is in part attributed to the losses suffered in the winter of 1906-07.<sup>46</sup>

Ted Gardner was foreman of the Imperial Ranch for almost all the time Burns held it. He was a hard worker and could spend hours in the saddle. Under his supervision the cattle herd was built up to about 7,000 head and the big lease was fenced. One summer he had 22,000 tons of hay put up under contract with farmers in the locality. In winter, Gardner organized feed camps for a radius of forty miles around the ranch.<sup>47</sup>

W.F. Puffer of Lacombe, later a member of the Alberta Legislative Assembly, was Burns' chief cattle buyer in the sweep of country that took in the Imperial Ranch. His territory included all the region between the Red Deer River and the Battle River. Burns put the ranch up for sale in 1916 and in August, 1917, the ranch and the breeding stock was divided between the two buyers, Mr. Thomas Usher and Mr. James L. Walters.<sup>48</sup>

For many years Burns had a small place just south of Fenn, a village north-west of the Imperial Ranch. After the sale of the Imper-

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<sup>45</sup>Information supplied by the office of the Dominion Archivist.

<sup>46</sup>Correspondence with J.A. Walters of Creston, B.C.

<sup>47</sup>Correspondence with J.A. Walters of Creston, B.C.

<sup>48</sup>Correspondence with J.A. Walters of Creston, B.C.





ial Ranch, Arthur Cockburn, a rider on the ranch, went there and operated the holding. Cockburn, whose true name appears to have been Wilson, had his own cattle business wiped out in the winter of 1906-07.<sup>49</sup>

The chief part of what was left of the vast ranch-lands of the Conrad Circle Cattle Company passed into the hands of Pat Burns in 1910. This American firm was the successor to the earlier Benton and St. Louis Cattle Company formed by Isaac G. Baker and the Conrad brothers in 1882.<sup>50</sup> For years the company operated from various leases it held in southern Alberta. Whatever location the company used was popularly known as the "Circle Ranch". Gradually the company began to lose its grazing leases to the incoming settlers. In 1907, the firm retreated to the less desirable lands along the Red Deer River north-east of Brooks,<sup>51</sup> and Howell Harris, the Alberta manager, began to close out operations elsewhere.<sup>52</sup>

Some of the property the Conrad Circle Cattle Company acquired north-east of Brooks was previously controlled by Delaval J. Beresford and D.C. Cantwell who also ranched at Chihuahua, Mexico.<sup>53</sup> These men had

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<sup>49</sup>Interview Mr. Thomas Usher of Scollard, Alberta, August 24, 1956. (Mr. Usher presently operates part of the original Imperial Ranch).

<sup>50</sup>Paul F. Sharp, Whoop-Up Country The Canadian-American West, 1865-1885 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1955), p. 235.

<sup>51</sup>Jane Havers, "Mulligan Jack", Canadian Cattlemen (January, 1956), p. 24.

<sup>52</sup>The Brooks Banner, August 31, 1911. (Reprint from the Bow Valley Call); Calgary Daily Herald, August 13, 1909.

<sup>53</sup>The Strathcona Plaindealer, March 6, 1903.





established their Alberta ranch in 1903,<sup>54</sup> but it would seem that the death of Beresford in December, 1906,<sup>55</sup> and the winter of 1906-07 prompted the disposal of the property to the Conrad people.

When Burns took over what was the last Circle Ranch in Alberta, he acquired a famous brand with his purchase of the cattle. The brand was a circle on the left ribs and the figure 3 on the left shoulder.<sup>56</sup> The 3 had been added to distinguish the Conrad Circle Cattle Company's Canadian owned cattle from their American owned cattle. Belknap Buck, foreman for the previous owners, stayed on with Burns for about two years.<sup>57</sup> Another foreman of the ranch for many years was George Crookes.<sup>58</sup>

The amount of land that was considered to be Circle Ranch pasture in the early years of Burns' ownership cannot be determined as it appears that Burns and other ranchers in the vicinity had informal understandings with the Canadian Pacific Railway, the owner of vast tracts of unfenced land in the region.<sup>59</sup> In later years, Patrick Burns formally leased over 100,000 acres which, when added to his deeded

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<sup>54</sup>The Strathcona Plaindealer, March 6, 1903.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., January 1, 1907.

<sup>56</sup>Information in the files of the Brand Recorders Office, Edmonton.

<sup>57</sup>Interview Mr. Chris Christianson of Brooks, Alberta, July 13, 1956. (Mr. Christianson has ranched in the area for many years).

<sup>58</sup>Interview Mr. Christianson of Brooks, July 13, 1956.

<sup>59</sup>Interview Mr. Thomas Farrell of Calgary, July 24, 1956. (Mr. Farrell managed the Burns ranches for several years).



lands of 5,600 acres brought his holdings to about 110,000 acres.<sup>60</sup>

The ranch buildings, some of which were erected by Beresford and Cantwell, were located near where One Tree Creek empties into the Red Deer River.<sup>61</sup> The village of Patricia, about nine miles to the south-east, was the shipping point.

It is said that Patrick Burns bought four ranches in the Sheep Creek district west of Okotoks, Alberta, in 1910.<sup>62</sup> One of the properties was the Quirk or "Q" Ranch founded by an Irishman, John Quirk, in the early 1880's.<sup>63</sup> Quirk used the letter Q as his cattle brand and brand and name are perpetuated by the post office of Kew and a branch of Sheep Creek called Quirk Creek.

The Quirk Ranch was not large, consisting of about 6,000 acres,<sup>64</sup> but cattle could be grazed in the adjacent Forest Reserve for a small fee.<sup>65</sup> Jack Dempsey, a nephew of Mr. and Mrs. Quirk, was Burns' foreman.<sup>66</sup> The other three ranches Burns secured in the same area in 1910 must have been rather small as they have proven difficult to identify.

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<sup>60</sup>Interview Mr. Thomas Farrell of Calgary, July 24, 1956.  
 (Mr. Farrell managed the Burns ranches for several years).

<sup>61</sup>Interview Mr. Farrell of Calgary, July 24, 1956.

<sup>62</sup>Fred Kennedy, "Jack Dempsey -- The Cowman," Canadian Cattlemen (Vol. 8, No. 3, December, 1945), p. 143.

<sup>63</sup>Fred W. Ings, "Tales from the Midway Ranch," Canadian Cattlemen (Vol. 7, No. 2, September, 1944), p. 63.

<sup>64</sup>Kelly, op. cit., p. 52.

<sup>65</sup>Interview Mr. Bob Carry of Turner Valley, August 21, 1956.  
 (Mr. Carry was a former rider for Burns).

<sup>66</sup>Interview Mr. Carry of Turner Valley, August 21, 1956.





In all Burns ran about 3,000 head of cattle on the Sheep Creek properties.<sup>67</sup> The Quirk Ranch was sold by Burns in about 1917.<sup>68</sup>

In 1912 or possibly in late 1911, Patrick Burns leased almost all of what was left of the Walrond Ranch situated eighteen miles north of Cowley, Alberta.<sup>69</sup> He held the 36,000 acre property<sup>70</sup> for the rest of his life and customarily kept around 5,000 cattle there.<sup>71</sup> George Milne, Einar Nelson and Hope Oliver served as foremen on the ranch.<sup>72</sup>

The Walrond Ranch Company was started in 1883 by Sir John Walrond and other English capitalists, with Dr. Duncan MacEachran, a Dominion Veterinary Surgeon, as manager.<sup>73</sup> Albertans usually referred to the ranch as the "Waldron" or as the "WR" as the latter were the letters used as a cattle brand.<sup>74</sup> For a number of years the firm had

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<sup>67</sup>Interview Mr. Carry of Turner Valley, August 21, 1956.

<sup>68</sup>Interview Mr. Carry of Turner Valley, August 21, 1956.

<sup>69</sup>Interview Mr. George Porter of Pincher Creek, August 27, 1958. (Mr. Porter ranched in the area for many years).

<sup>70</sup>C.W. Buchanan, "History of the Walrond Cattle Rancho Ltd." Canadian Cattlemen, (Vol. 8, No. 4, March, 1946), p. 171 ff. (The figure 36,000 is an approximate one).

<sup>71</sup>Interview Mr. Porter of Pincher Creek, August 27, 1958.

<sup>72</sup>Interview Mr. Porter of Pincher Creek, August 27, 1958.

<sup>73</sup>Freda G. Bundry, "The Past Gives Way" Canadian Cattlemen (Vol. 7, No. 1, June, 1944), p. 30 ff. (The spelling of "MacEachran" varies from writer to writer).

<sup>74</sup>Kelly, op. cit., p. 158.





two hundred thousand or more acres under lease.<sup>75</sup> In 1897, the company was reorganized as the New Walrond Rancho Company Limited.<sup>76</sup> The winter of 1906 was a severe blow to the firm, and in 1908 the remaining cattle were sold to Pat Burns,<sup>77</sup> while Mr. W.R. Hull took a three year lease on the deeded property.<sup>78</sup> When Hull's lease expired, Burns rented the land from the New Walrond Rancho Company.

At a date which seems to be 1912 or 1913, Burns increased the scope of his operations east of Olds when he took a five year lease on the 22½ section Baxter-Reed Ranch just east of his other properties.<sup>79</sup> The ranch was founded in 1902<sup>80</sup> by James R. Baxter and James William Reed of Ida Grove, Iowa.<sup>81</sup> In conjunction with R.C. Reed they formed the Baxter-Reed Ranching Company, Limited in 1909.<sup>82</sup> Later the partnership was dissolved and it was the Baxter estate which rented the land to Burns.<sup>83</sup>

Between the years 1912 and 1917, Burns held a lease of 6,062

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<sup>75</sup>Kelly, op. cit., p. 166.

<sup>76</sup>Buchanan, op. cit., p. 260.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., p. 261.

<sup>78</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, August 13, 1909.

<sup>79</sup>The Olds Gazette, September 8, 1955.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid., September 8, 1955.

<sup>81</sup>Report of the Department of the Provincial Secretary of Alberta Including the Report of the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies 1909 (Edmonton: Government Printer, 1910), p. 116.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid.

<sup>83</sup>The Olds Gazette, September 8, 1955.



acres in British Columbia. The property lay in Townships 21 and 22, Range 16, and in Township 21, Range 17, West of the 6th Meridian.<sup>84</sup> Located to the east of the North Thomson River north of Kamloops, the ranch is believed to have been obtained to expedite meat contracts secured during the construction of the Canadian Northern Railway.<sup>85</sup>

Burns had at least two other properties in British Columbia, both of them small. The Carlin Farm near Shuswap consisted of 352 acres of deeded land while the Blakeburn Ranch near Coquitlam consisted of 815 acres of deeded land. The Blakeburn Ranch was held in partnership with W.J. "Blake" Wilson, Burns' right-hand man in British Columbia. It is not known when these properties were obtained, but they formed part of Burns' estate at the time of his death.<sup>86</sup>

In both British Columbia and Alberta, small grazing properties were often obtained near the towns where Burns operated meat markets. On such lands cattle were held to supply the markets with fresh meat. A good example of this practice was at Macleod, Alberta. In 1911, Burns disposed of the 128 acre site on which his old slaughter house was located,<sup>87</sup> and purchased the 600 acre farm of Mrs. A. Monty for

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<sup>84</sup>Information supplied by the office of the Dominion Archivist.

<sup>85</sup>Interview Mr. Herb Clark of Calgary, October 6, 1956. (Mr. Clark served Burns in B.C. for a time).

<sup>86</sup>Information supplied by Mr. R.J. Burns of Calgary, in an interview and in an examination of old files of the P. Burns estate, August 30, 1961.

<sup>87</sup>The Macleod Advertiser, October 19, 1911.



his expanding business.<sup>88</sup>

The ranch properties Burns acquired between 1907 and 1913 materially helped him meet the problem of declining cattle production. It appears as something of a paradox that Burns secured grazing lands while at the same time a great number of ranchers curtailed their operations or went out of business. Burns, however, was quicker to realize that a meat shortage would develop as a result of the winter of 1906-07 and was particularly concerned when the situation was aggravated by the massive swing to the production of grain. The large properties he secured, such as the Mackie, the Imperial, the Circle, and the lease south of the Blackfoot Reservation, lay in the more arid regions of Alberta. Here, and in the foothills country, lay the last strongholds of the ranchers.

Despite the fact that Burns foresaw the meat shortage of 1911 and 1912, he was not absolved from criticism when the scarcity developed. In 1913, a prominent Macleod rancher, Mr. Maunsell, said there was

no one so much to be blamed for the scarcity of cattle in the country as Gordon, Ironside and Fares and Mr. Burns himself, who for years have refused to pay prices that would make cattle raising profitable.<sup>89</sup>

L.V. Kelly, in his book, The Range Men, presents an opposite criticism, although it is not clear if his remarks apply directly to the period under discussion.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>88</sup>The Macleod Advertiser, October 19, 1911.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., February 6, [1913].

<sup>90</sup>Kelly's material is organized rather loosely and one has difficulty in determining the period to which his remarks apply.





Certain ranchers declare that P. Burns and other buyers -- but particularly P. Burns -- harmed the ranching industry when a demand was made on the ranchers for fat cows, thus cutting down the breeding strength of the herds ... Burns opened a wide market for rougher meats, supplying construction camps and lumber outfits in eastern British Columbia, selling them cheap beef and calling on the ranchers of Alberta to supply it. Thirty dollars for a fat cow was as good as forty dollars for a fat steer, ready money was always welcome, and many ranchers cut cruelly into their herds to sell their fat animals, cows and steers alike.<sup>91</sup>

Kelly's book was published in 1913, so the criticism he sets forth is most interesting when compared with Burns' remarks of 1909:

Keep your cows for breeding. We are today shipping cattle which should be kept at home. If stock are thus depleted, in three years' time we will be forced to import beef into Alberta.<sup>92</sup>

The foresight of Burns compared favourably with the hindsight of "certain ranchers".

In 1913, Burns said the farmers had created the cattle shortage by making wheat "the alpha and omega of their existence".<sup>93</sup>

Four years previously he had warned the farmers that they should keep their operations diversified.<sup>94</sup> Kelly makes an observation in his book that the emphasis on grain production created a great demand for work horses. As the price for horses soared many ranchers switched

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<sup>91</sup>Kelly, op. cit., p. 51.

<sup>92</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, August 10, 1909.

<sup>93</sup>The Macleod Advertiser, February 6 [1913] .

<sup>94</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, August 10, 1909.



from cattle raising to horse raising.<sup>95</sup>

In Maunsell's remarks and in the extract from Kelly's book, one gathers that whether the price of cattle was low or high, Burns was the man responsible. George Lane of the Bar U Ranch attended a livestock conference in Ottawa in 1912<sup>96</sup> and in his address expressed this view:

It has been generally said that the abattoirs and packing houses govern the prices. Now, I do not think this is true. It may be true in some instances where men get into towns or cities with small shipments, but our markets has always been governed by the export trade.<sup>97</sup>

The conflict of opinions among those in the cattle trade as to what lay behind their difficulties would seem to defy any bold analysis unless a massive study were made on this matter alone.

As the high price of beef brought a renewed interest in ranching, there was the criticism that the great leases held by men such as Burns made it difficult for others to get land.<sup>98</sup> In a letter to the Western Stock Growers' Association, Burns stated: "We have quite a bit of leased land and we have several ranches which I would be very willing to throw open at any time if we could get the small ranchers and farmers started in the cattle business as we have all we can do with-

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<sup>95</sup>Kelly, op. cit., p. 51.

<sup>96</sup>Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture of the Province of Alberta 1912 (Edmonton: Government Printer, 1913), p. 198.

<sup>97</sup>Kelly, op. cit., p. 467.

<sup>98</sup>The Macleod Spectator, November 19, 1912; The Macleod Advertiser, November 21, 1912.



out raising cattle."<sup>99</sup> Burns may have been taking a "put up or shut up" attitude in making this offer or he may have been making a bold tongue-in-the-cheek bluff. In any case his ranching empire was not immediately dismembered. Once again the Canadian economy was experiencing difficulty. In 1913, a general recession set in, and there was little improvement for the next two years.<sup>100</sup>

In 1912, George Lane believed that the future of ranching lay in arrangements whereby farmers would feed the ranchers' stock in winter. Such arrangements would permit the ranchers to use their leases for summer grazing only and thereby enable them to pasture more animals. He observed that Burns had practiced the measure for some time and that it was the "logical solution to the ranching industry."<sup>101</sup>

The various views as to what was wrong with the ranching industry seem but to sharpen the obvious fact that the cruel winter of 1906-07 and the subsequent emphasis on grain production had marked the end of the great era of ranching in Alberta. A period of adjustment was necessary before the shortage of cattle would be overcome.

Although Patrick Burns acquired vast tracts of land between

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<sup>99</sup>Macleod Spectator, January 15, 1914.

<sup>100</sup>Eric John Hanson, "A Financial History of Alberta, 1905-1950" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Clark University, Worcester, Massachusetts, 1952), p. 169. (Available on microcard in the Rutherford Library of the University of Alberta).

<sup>101</sup>Kelly, op. cit., p. 441.





1908 and 1912, he parted with one piece in 1909<sup>102</sup> and therein lies a story of many versions. Father Lacombe, the famous pioneer missionary of the West, had plans to erect a home for the care of orphans and the aged. As on previous occasions, he approached his old friend Pat Burns for help. He wanted Burns to donate 200 acres of land for the site of the building. Burns readily agreed but then the question arose as to what land would be chosen for the home. Father Lacombe decided he wanted some property immediately north of the hamlet of Midnapore. There, to the east of the road leading north to Calgary, was a gentle rise, a beautiful site for a building. Close at hand Fish Creek flowed through wooded banks to the Bow River.

Like Father Lacombe, Burns fully appreciated this part of his Bow Valley Ranch. Pat hedged and tried to persuade Father Lacombe to choose an alternative location. He even offered to donate 600 acres if they were selected elsewhere. Neither man would give way until one day Father Lacombe entered Burns' Calgary office. He gently ushered two visitors of Burns' out the door and again asked for the site he wanted. Burns again demurred but inquired why he was so set on getting the location in question. The old Father told him that in the early years it was the favourite place where he and other missionaries would stop to rest when exhausted by their travels. Burns, deeply touched, said, "You can have it!"<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>102</sup>The Macleod News, December 14, 1916.

<sup>103</sup>Interview Mme. Isabelle Burnada of Vancouver, August 23, 1955. (This version of the gift of the land has been chosen as Mme. Burnada heard it directly from Mr. Burns).



The Sisters of Providence found Mr. Burns a staunch supporter of the Lacombe Home. Every week a free supply of meat was delivered to the institution from the packing house. Burns was once provoked when he learned that the shipments had deteriorated in quality and the matter was immediately rectified. Donations of other food stuffs were made from time to time and many a Christmas was brightened by the arrival of toys for the children. The milk supply of the Home was taken care of by the loan of cows from the Bow Valley Ranch.<sup>104</sup>

Burns' relationships with the homesteaders of Alberta need some comment. Mr. E.J. "Bud" Cotton recalls a number of ways friction developed while he was riding for Burns between the years 1908 and 1913. Sometimes when the cowboys were driving cattle along a road allowance something would be encountered which would cause the animals to mill around. The fences, often having but two strands of wire on widely separated posts, would go down and the cattle would pour into a farmer's crop causing a good deal of damage. As barbed wire was a costly item for many settlers, they would fence in a spring, a creek, or haystacks with less than adequate protection and the inevitable would happen. Some of Burns' big steers would make a shambles of the settler's work. In Mr. Cotton's opinion, claims for damages were generously met. He wryly remembers that haystacks had a peculiar habit of growing in size between the time the damage was done and the time

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<sup>104</sup>Interview with one of the Sisters of Providence at the Lacombe Home, April 4, 1956.





the claim was settled.<sup>105</sup>

The matter of strayed cattle also caused trouble, especially if the animals were young and unbranded. At round-up time the Burns riders would brand all the young animals in the herd. At this time an irate homesteader might appear and identify an animal as his. From a cowboy's point of view, stray cattle, particularly the mature animals, were a nuisance that could be well done without. An established herd never welcomed newcomers without some disturbance. The animals would fight one another and injuries sometimes resulted. On a cattle drive strange cattle mixing with the herd were apt to slow down progress.<sup>106</sup>

There are those who say that Pat Burns made his start in Alberta by stealing cattle. Oddly enough the same people seem to know very little else about the man. The allegation is never supported by facts such as the time, place and the victim concerned. As no evidence can be found that Burns was ever arrested or tried for cattle theft, the charge does not seem to carry much weight. In consequence, the story is as much a discredit to the pioneers of Alberta as it is to Burns. It suggests that a known cattle thief could escape the law because people were too weak-kneed or ignorant to attempt legal action. Burns seems entirely out of character when labelled as a thief. In addition, when he arrived in Alberta he had a substantial

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<sup>105</sup>Interview Mr. E.J. Cotton of Calgary, August 26, 1956.

<sup>106</sup>Interview Mr. E.J. Cotton of Calgary, August 26, 1956.





contract to supply meat to the C. & E. Railway and shortly after a contract to supply over \$20,000 worth of meat to the Indians of the Blood Reserve. It seems unlikely that he would have jeopardized his position by running the risk of stealing cattle. Perhaps those who repeat the story that Burns stole cattle do so because it seems to add colour to the story of the early West.

On the whole, Burns and the ranchers of Alberta generally, were on very good terms with the homesteaders. There was none of the deep animosity which marked the history of some parts of the United States where blood was shed in an attempt to preserve the domain of the cattlemen.

Mr. Frank Collicut bought cattle for Burns for several years after the turn of the century. He remembers that during the hard years it was "Burns money" which kept many settlers in the country. The settlers would contract to put up quantities of hay for use in the various winter feed camps. When Burns had more cattle than he could carry at his own camps he would contract with the settlers to look after the surplus. A homesteader would be paid a basic sum for looking after the cattle during the winter. In addition, a payment was made based on the weight the animals gained during the feeding period. This provided incentive for good care and feeding. Many a homesteader secured his first cattle from Burns without being pressed for an immediate cash payment. In appreciation some would not sell their animals to anyone but Burns.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>107</sup>Interview Mr. Frank Collicut of Calgary, September 1, 1955.



One year John Kennedy, a Burns buyer, was down around Taber buying lambs. From a buyer's point of view the prices agreed on were unusually favourable. Kennedy returned to Calgary with a high sense of accomplishment and reported his transaction to his employer. Burns shook his head when he heard the prices. "My God, John, how do you expect these people to make a living at that price? Go back and give them more."<sup>108</sup> Burns was a shrewd business man but not to the point where his immediate gain defeated his larger purpose. He realized that by keeping the sheep men in business he was keeping himself in business.

It was the practice of some sellers to add to the weight and appearance of their cattle by a generous feeding and watering just before a buyer was due to arrive. A liberal supply of salt on the feeding grounds did much to create a mighty thirst among the cattle which could only be satisfied by the drinking of gallons of water. When possible the buyers would have the animals stand over night in a corral before taking delivery. The practice gave the animals time to eliminate their wastes and the buyers benefitted. With the coming of the weighing scales the seller was trapped. Either he could arrange to have his cattle at the delivery point early enough to spend a night in the corrals, or he could accept a five per cent shrinkage on the scale weight. An outcry of "graft" was raised against the buyers when

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<sup>108</sup>Interview Mr. J. Howard Kelly of Calgary, August 1, 1956. (Mr. Kelly is now (1962) President of Burns & Co. Ltd.).



they adopted this system, but it was not changed.<sup>109</sup> The introduction of the weighing scale, however, guaranteed that neither seller or buyer could dispute the weight of the cattle. Those experienced in estimating the weight of cattle found it great sport to make wagers as to what some particular steer or bunch of cattle would weigh. Burns, one of the West's masters in estimating the weight of beeves, enjoyed pitting his skill against others. Many of the first cattle scales used in the West were installed at his expense.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>109</sup>Macleod Gazette, December 26, 1902.

<sup>110</sup>Interview Mr. T. Stapleton of Calgary, July 20, 1958.  
(A retired farmer and rancher of the Macleod district).





## CHAPTER VII

### THE ERA OF WORLD WAR I

As the career of Patrick Burns approached the outbreak of World War I, the great pioneering period in the history of Western Canada was coming to a close. The previous quarter century had three features that were particularly related to the growth of Burns' business: first, the activity in railway construction; second, the mining boom, particularly in British Columbia; third, the various developments in the livestock industry.

The railways had furnished Burns with beef contracts, and had opened up vast territories where every new settlement meant an additional market for meat. In 1914 the Grand Trunk Pacific was completed to the Pacific as was the Canadian Northern the following year. After that date the construction of new railways dropped sharply.

The mining boom in the Kootenays of British Columbia and the opening of the Crow's Nest Pass region of Alberta had fostered the growth of Burns' meat trade. The new mining communities prompted railway construction and lumbering and Burns kept pace with their needs. When the exciting developmental years passed, he was firmly entrenched in both provinces.

When Burns arrived in Alberta in 1890, the cattle industry had just reached the stage where it needed wider markets. In the years that followed, he seized opportunities to develop markets in British Columbia, Alberta, the Yukon, Eastern Canada, England and Australia.



As the rangelands were put under the plow, he remained confident in the future of the cattle industry.<sup>1</sup> When the emphasis on wheat production threatened to bring on a beef shortage, Burns had the foresight to expand his ranching activities. The beef shortage proved temporary but ranching, as many westerners knew it, was a thing of the past.

In an effort to recapture or preserve the colour of earlier years, the Calgary Stampede was born. The promoters of the first Calgary Stampede of 1912 needed funds to finance the affair. Four prominent Alberta ranchers, George Lane, Archie Maclean, A.E. Cross, and Pat Burns advanced funds and the show was staged.<sup>2</sup> The first Calgary Stampede was judged a success and a few years later it became an annual event.

An attraction of the later Calgary Stampedes, the chuck-wagon races, are said to have originated during the early range round-ups. One might wonder, however, if the custom of starting the race by having the drivers make a figure eight around two barrels is not reminiscent of a driving competition Patrick Burns took part in at the Calgary fair in July, 1903. On that occasion each one of five contestants drove his team and buggy through several barrels forming a figure eight. Extracts from a newspaper account shows Burns' performance to be as follows:

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<sup>1</sup>J. Castell Hopkins (editor), The Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs 1906 (Toronto: The Annual Review Publishing Company, 1907), p. 28.

<sup>2</sup>The Lethbridge Herald, July 11, 1935, p. 116. (Golden Jubilee Edition).



The first pair to negotiate the eight was P. Burns' dark brown team hooked to a tan buggy. Mr. Burns went through without touching a barrel ... Mr. Burns was then called on to take a second turn. This time he drove very rapidly and was unfortunate enough to knock down the fourth and ninth barrels ... Once more Mr. Burns was called upon to drive and amid applause he finished leaving all barrels standing ... Mr. Johnson was awarded first prize, Mr. Burns second, and Mr. Turner third. In some of the big shows the drivers would not have been tolerated. Most of the drivers could have taken a lesson from Mr. Burns in holding the lines.<sup>3</sup>

When World War I began, Patrick Burns had been on the Alberta scene for twenty-four years and another twenty-three years lay ahead of him. A telescoping of the latter years follows, for in the writer's opinion, Burns' business now passes the stage where the pioneering aspects are as marked, or where expansion alone is surprising. In brief, we have a leader with a very capable team behind him operating a soundly structured business which provides the capital for further expansion.

World War I brought many contracts for the shipment of meat and cattle to Europe. "Patrick Burns was appointed by the British Government to organize the purchase of its beef supplies in America, and the trust was more than vindicated."<sup>4</sup> "In the early stages of the war France required some 30,000 head of live cattle, and although this contract was a heavy, difficult and unprofitable one, Mr. Burns

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<sup>3</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, July 8, 1903.

<sup>4</sup>A memorandum made by Mr. J.J. Tighe of Calgary from the Cream Producer, March issue, 1937. (The magazine was an agricultural publication of Burns and Co.).





at once undertook the work."<sup>5</sup> The Belgian government<sup>6</sup> and the Greek government<sup>7</sup> also are known to have placed large orders with Burns in the latter stages of the war.

During the course of the war, the demand for food products caused the price of cattle to reach unprecedented levels. In May, 1918, the Calgary market reached \$16.80 per hundred live weight.<sup>8</sup> The high prices, combined with programs which the federal and provincial governments introduced to encourage beef production, brought the numbers of cattle to new peaks.<sup>9</sup> One might assume that the improved cattle market would have led Burns to expand his ranching activities. Unless the number of cattle handled in winter feed camps was greatly expanded, the opposite was true. As recounted in the previous chapter, the following lands passed from Burns' control: the Mackie properties between 1917 and 1920; the properties south of the Blackfoot Indian Reservation in 1917; the Imperial Ranch in 1917; the Quirk Ranch in 1917; the North

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<sup>5</sup>"Pat Burns -- Cattle King a British Appreciation". (An undated account in the Calgary Public Library which is identified as being copied from a British publication).

<sup>6</sup>Interview Mr. Jack Collins of Calgary, August 28, 1956. (Mr. Collins was a former Burns employee).

<sup>7</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, January 23, 1920.

<sup>8</sup>I.A. Coles and A.J. Charnetski, "Gov't Brought in First Cattle Herd to Alberta for Indian Tribes in '79", Calgary Daily Herald, July 8, 1950. (The authors are officials with the Alberta Department of Agriculture).

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.



Thompson River property in 1917; and the Baxter-Reed Ranch east of Olds around 1918.

He also sold two of the three ranches he bought during the war. In 1915,<sup>10</sup> he obtained a small ranch property of some 3,000 acres lying five miles west of Turner Valley.<sup>11</sup> The property had been part of the estate of the late John Lineham, a prominent pioneer of Okotoks.<sup>12</sup> Within a short time the "Lineham Ranch" was sold to the owners of the Bar U Ranch, but it returned to Burns around 1923 when the purchasers encountered financial difficulties.<sup>13</sup> In 1917, Burns bought the 11,000 acre Bar S Ranch west of Nanton from the Vancouver and Prince Rupert Ranching Company.<sup>14</sup> At one time the Bar S was operated by Walter Skrine whose wife was the poetess, Moira O'Neil.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>The date given is based on a July 17, 1915, memorandum in the files of the Brand Recorders Office in Edmonton which acknowledged the transfer of John Lineham's cattle brand to Patrick Burns. Those interviewed have been vague about the date.

<sup>11</sup>Interview Mr. Bob Carry of the Turner Valley district, August 21, 1956. (Mr. Carry rode for Burns).

<sup>12</sup>Interview Mr. Bob Carry of the Turner Valley district, August 21, 1956.

<sup>13</sup>Interview Mr. Bob Carry of the Turner Valley district, August 21, 1956.

<sup>14</sup>Correspondence with Mrs. Geo. Chattaway of the Nanton district, Alberta. (Mrs. Chattaway is a daughter of the late Roderick Macleay).

<sup>15</sup>Correspondence with Mrs. Geo. Chattaway of the Nanton district. (Skrine appears to have held the ranch from 1887 to 1902).



Shortly after Burns bought the ranch,<sup>16</sup> he sold it to Roderick Macleay of the neighbouring Rocking P Ranch.<sup>17</sup> Around the beginning of the war, Burns bought and retained the Bradfield property of some 2,500 acres located south of Priddis, Alberta.<sup>18</sup> The previous owners had secured the property from one H. Ford in 1907,<sup>19</sup> and ran it as Bradfield College, an institution to train English boys in the ways of ranching.<sup>20</sup>

Figures quoted in earlier chapters make it possible to estimate that the acreage of all of the known Burns ranch properties at the beginning of 1917 was about 450,000. The great acreages passed from Burns' hands in 1917 and the lesser amounts relinquished in the next three years can be calculated to approximate 300,000 acres. It is certain that a portion of the reduction was required because of the form of tenure by which he held the land. However, a great part of the decrease can be considered part of a deliberate plan.

F. M. Black, treasurer of the firm from 1909 to 1917, has stated that an important factor contributing to Burns' progress was "the great increase in land values consequent upon the heavy immigra-

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<sup>16</sup>Mr. Thomas Ellis, father-in-law of Patrick Burns, was one of those behind the Vancouver and Prince Rupert Ranching Company. See Calgary Daily Herald, December 8, 1909.

<sup>17</sup>Correspondence with Mrs. Geo. Chattaway of the Nanton district.

<sup>18</sup>Interview Mr. Geo. Sylvester of the Priddis district, August 22, 1956.

<sup>19</sup>The Morning Albertan, August 10, 1911.

<sup>20</sup>Interview Mr. Bert Shepphard of the Longview district, August 21, 1956.





tion in the beginning of this century."<sup>21</sup> As Burns' low-priced lands increased in value they "formed the backlog of the financing necessitated for his developing business."<sup>22</sup> Although at this time, land values had increased mainly because of wartime prosperity, Black's analysis seems to explain why Burns disposed of certain properties between 1917 and 1920.

This liquidation of some of his assets may have been connected with Burns' expansion of his packing house operations. In October, 1917, Burns secured the abattoir of the Russell-Baker Packing Company, Ltd. at Prince Albert, Saskatchewan.<sup>23</sup> Norman and George Russell and F.M. Baker were the previous owners.<sup>24</sup> At the time the population of Prince Albert was only about 7,500<sup>25</sup> but by securing facilities at this point Burns could command the growing trade of the northern part of the province.

In 1918, Burns purchased the plant of Hugh Armour and Company

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<sup>21</sup>Francis Mollison Black, "Patrick Burns as I Knew Him." (A clipping in the files of the Calgary Public Library, dated March 27, 1937. Unable to identify the source).

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>The Farm and Ranch Review, October 20, 1917. (The date is sometimes given as 1918 but the newspaper report is preferred as it is more specific. The plant may have been leased in 1917 and purchased in 1918).

<sup>24</sup>Information supplied by the Archives Division of the Legislative Library, Regina.

<sup>25</sup>Information supplied by the North Central Saskatchewan Regional Library, Prince Alberta.



at Regina to handle the southern trade.<sup>26</sup> The population of Regina at this time was around 30,000.<sup>27</sup> Burns' chief competitor in Saskatchewan was the Gordon, Ironside and Fares firm which operated a packing plant at Moose Jaw.<sup>28</sup> The purchase of the two plants in Saskatchewan ended the long and uneconomic rail shipments which had been necessary. Burns no longer had to send Saskatchewan livestock to his Edmonton and Calgary plants for processing or to ship dressed meats from Alberta to Saskatchewan. No retail markets were ever established by Burns east of the Alberta boundary.

In 1917, Burns laid the foundations of a wholesale fruit and vegetable distributing system. The previous year, Mr. A.W. Warren, President of the Consolidated Mining and Smelting Company of Trail, B.C., had a conversation with Burns on a transcontinental train. Mr. Warren had fruit lands in the Okanagan Valley and he expressed dissatisfaction with the marketing of his crops. He suggested that Burns should handle the disposal of fruit on the Prairies and the latter agreed to handle the task.<sup>29</sup>

In the summer of 1917, carloads of fruits and vegetables began to arrive in Calgary. Burns' Calgary staff was caught unpre-

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<sup>26</sup>Information supplied by the Archives Division of the Legislative Library, Regina.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>Information obtained from typewritten notes compiled by Mr. John J. Tighe of Calgary, a long-time employee of Burns. P. 36 of notes. (Hereinafter referred to as "Tighe's Notes").



pared as their employer had little conception of the size of the job he had undertaken. Two men on his staff, Leslie Darby and Harry Hoskins, had experience in marketing fruits and vegetables and they quickly organized the sale of the perishable produce.<sup>30</sup>

Success was tasted, and it was decided that the only way to conduct the new business was to establish volume sales over a large territory. After having been temporarily housed in a meat warehouse, the new Fruit Department was moved to a rented warehouse on Eighth Avenue West.<sup>31</sup> In 1920, fruit departments were established in Edmonton, Saskatoon, Regina, Moose Jaw and Prince Albert.<sup>32</sup> The company's meat markets helped handle the distribution of the produce. P. Burns and Company appears to have carried out no significant expansion of its fruit and vegetable system in the five years following 1920. In this period Canada experienced an economic recession and the firm may have found it unwise to extend its operations in this field. The continued participation of the firm in the new branch of activity indicates that it brought some benefit to both the producers and the consumers and that it appreciated the new source of revenue.

Just before World War I, Burns passed his sixtieth year, yet he continued to be very active. A visitor to the Calgary plant site

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<sup>30</sup>Tighe's Notes, p. 36.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>32</sup>Lethbridge Herald, February 24, 1937.





would have seen him touring the facilities on horseback<sup>33</sup> or up on a catwalk of the stockyard corrals inspecting cattle.<sup>34</sup> Entering Calgary by rail from the east, one passes the packing plant on the way to the downtown depot. Burns, always eager to save time in the pursuit of his affairs, would sometimes jump off a slowly moving train while it was opposite his plant. His trick would be long forgotten had he not broken his arm in its performance during World War I.<sup>35</sup>

Burns gave time and money to causes related to the war. He was a supporter and executive member of the Canadian Patriotic Fund,<sup>36</sup> the Navy League of Canada,<sup>37</sup> and of Victory Loan organizations.<sup>38</sup> He contributed money to payment for equipment needed by the armed services.<sup>39</sup> After the war, the Navy League continued to get his support,

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<sup>33</sup>Interview Mr. Ed Hoschka of Calgary, March 3, 1956. (Mr. Hoschka was the foreman of Burns' Bow Valley Ranch for many years).

<sup>34</sup>Interview Mr. E. Nowers of Calgary, March 3, 1956. (Mr. Nowers has been in business in Calgary for many years).

<sup>35</sup>Interview Mr. Wm. Mayhew of Midnapore, September 3, 1955. (Mr. Mayhew was the head gardener at Burns' Calgary residence. Slightly different versions of the story have been heard).

<sup>36</sup>P.H. Morris (editor), The Canadian Patriotic Fund A Record of Its Activities from 1914 to 1919 (n.p., n.d.), p. 81. (A copy may be found in the Edmonton Public Library).

<sup>37</sup>Interview the late Mrs. John Burns of Calgary, September 2, 1955.

<sup>38</sup>Calgary Daily Herald: November 28, 1918; December 7, 1918.

<sup>39</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, July 3, 1919. (Two airplanes); Correspondence in the possession of Mr. Tigne of Calgary, (guns and equipment for 1200 men).



especially the Calgary unit of the Sea Cadets.<sup>40</sup> He was generous in supporting the building fund of the Canadian Legion, and donated a number of city lots for its lawn bowling activities.<sup>41</sup> A further link with the servicemen was established when he was appointed honorary colonel of the First Battalion of the Calgary Regiment.<sup>42</sup>

Isabelle Boyer de la Giroday's father was in France with the Canadian army when Burns' attention was drawn to her promising voice. He quietly undertook to provide for her musical training in Canada and Europe.<sup>43</sup> After a series of successes in Europe which included being presented at Buckingham Palace, the young contralto returned to tour Canada.<sup>44</sup> As a gesture of appreciation to Mr. Burns, his protégée held a special concert in his honour at the Hotel Vancouver.<sup>45</sup> Previously she had shown her regard by adopting the professional name of "Burnada" -- the "Burn" from her benefactor and the "ada" from Canada.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>Interview the late Mrs. John Burns of Calgary, September 2, 1955.

<sup>41</sup>Tighe's Notes, p. 23.

<sup>42</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, February 27, 1937, p. 11.

<sup>43</sup>Interview Mme. Isabelle Burnada of Vancouver, August 23, 1955.

<sup>44</sup>Information given on a concert management sheet belonging to Mme. Burnada.

<sup>45</sup>Interview Mme. Burnada of Vancouver, August 23, 1955.

<sup>46</sup>Interview Mme. Burnada of Vancouver, August 23, 1955.



Some years after the war a project was undertaken by the United Church of Canada to erect a chapel in Vancouver in memory of the servicemen who had lost their lives. The Canadian Memorial Chapel, as it was called, was to have a commemorative window for each province. George O. Fallis, later the author of A Padre's Pilgrimage, set out across Canada to raise the money.<sup>47</sup>

In each province, the Reverend G.O. Fallis would ask for assistance in drawing up a list of people who would be likely to contribute funds. In Edmonton, Premier Brownlee told the padre that he did not wish to submit any names for Southern Alberta as he thought Mr. Burns would be in a better position to do so.<sup>48</sup>

The Reverend G.O. Fallis relates his Calgary visit with Patrick Burns, a devout Roman Catholic, as follows:

An appointment was made and I told my story to the cattle king of Western Canada. He was greatly impressed and said he would be very glad to think about the matter and if I would return the next day he would give me a list of those whom he thought should be asked to underwrite Calgary's share of the Alberta window. I returned the following day at the appointed hour of eleven o'clock. Mr. Burns told me that he had thought a great deal about the whole matter and felt that the names he should give me would be those who had made the greatest contribution in the development of Calgary and Southern Alberta.

'I have drawn up a list,' he said with a quiet smile, 'but alas they are all dead, so I have written a cheque for seven hundred dollars, which will be one hundred dollars for each of them.' Imagine my joy at meeting such a broad-minded man for as I read the list it was headed by two Methodist ministers, the MacDougalls, who had been

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<sup>47</sup>George O. Fallis, A Padre's Pilgrimage (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1953), p. 105.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., p. 111.





pioneer missionaries. The third name was a Roman Catholic priest, Rev. Father Lacombe, after whom Lacombe, Alberta, was named. Another was Major-General P.B. Strange who was commander of the Northwest Mounted Police in Southern Alberta.<sup>49</sup>

Returning to business matters, the prosperity sparked by World War I proved shortlived, especially for the cattlemen of Southern Alberta. The summer of 1919 was dry and the hay crop was light.<sup>50</sup> The winter of 1919-1920 was very severe, and cattle losses were high because of the weather and shortage of fodder.<sup>51</sup> In some cases the cost of wintering the cattle with high priced hay was more than they were worth.<sup>52</sup>

The fall of 1920 marked a great decline in cattle prices.<sup>53</sup> One factor bringing reduced prices was that stock-growers, discouraged or financially pressed as a result of the winter of 1919-1920, sold their cattle in such numbers that the market could not absorb them.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>Fallis, op. cit., p. 112.

<sup>50</sup>"Report of the Provincial Live Stock Commissioner", Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture of the Province of Alberta, 1920 (Edmonton: King's Printer, 1921), p. 11.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid.

<sup>53</sup>"Report of the Provincial Live Stock Commissioner", Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture of the Province of Alberta, 1920 (Edmonton: King's Printer, 1921), p. 11.

<sup>54</sup>A feature of the cattle industry familiar to many Albertans.



Another factor was the falling off of the post-war demands for meat and cattle from war ravaged Europe.<sup>55</sup> The poor cattle market was aggravated by the emergency tariff levied by the United States in 1921 and by the Fordney-McCumber tariff of 1922.<sup>56</sup> The action tended to close the American market to Canadian producers who had enjoyed duty free privileges since 1911.<sup>57</sup>

The return to three and four cent<sup>58</sup> beef was a terrible blow to those cattlemen who had optimistically bought more breeding stock or land during the years of peak prices. Debts that had previously looked reasonable now proved to be crushing burdens and many cattlemen lost everything. In several situations, Pat Burns was the man who was turned to for help.<sup>59</sup>

The Burns firm did not escape the post-war slump. The Annual Financial Review shows that in the fiscal year ending June 30, 1921, the company suffered a loss of \$715,838.68.<sup>60</sup> Had this amount repre-

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<sup>55</sup>Interview Mr. Jack Collins of Calgary, August 28, 1956. (Mr. Collins worked for Burns).

<sup>56</sup>Eric John Hanson, "A Financial History of Alberta 1905-1950" (unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Clark University, Worcester, Massachusetts, 1952), p. 221. (Available on microcard in the Rutherford Library, University of Alberta, Edmonton).

<sup>57</sup>Coles and Charnetski, op. cit.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid.

<sup>59</sup>The writer has learned the names of some of those who received help from Burns but it is not advisable to disclose them.

<sup>60</sup>W.R. Houston (editor), The Annual Financial Review Canadian, Vol. XXIV, 1924 (Toronto: Houston's, 1924), p. 190.



in the Sheep Creek district, had a visit from Burns and Dr. Grant Hall -- later a vice-president of the Canadian Pacific Railway. Burns asked Dempsey to get a pack outfit ready for a trip to the mining camp. The next day the trio set out. Burns was soon riding in the lead and from time to time would turn and exhort Grant Hall to "Hurry up!" Hall constantly urged his horse over the trail but a substantial gap always remained unclosed.<sup>71</sup> That night at the mining camp Hall brought the matter up.

Burns, it's the horse!

What do you mean Hall, it's the horse?

Burns, you are no better rider than I am but you've got the best horse.<sup>72</sup>

Burns was silent for a moment then he suggested that Hall could ride his horse for the return trip.<sup>73</sup>

The next day Hall saddled up Burns' horse and moved off first. Shortly after, Burns strolled over to Dempsey and asked him if a certain horse in the outfit were Dempsey's good stake horse. Burns received permission to borrow the horse. He saddled up, and before the party had covered two miles, he was again ahead of Hall calling back to him to "Hurry up!"<sup>74</sup>

Herb Clark made frequent trips to the mining site with supplies during 1917. On one occasion Burns came with him to inspect the

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<sup>71</sup>Fred Kennedy, "One of Alberta's Top Cowmen Quits", Calgary Herald, July 31, 1945.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid.





Alex Sharpe was employed to further the plans for development.<sup>68</sup>

Burns' failure to bring the coal mining project to completion in the early years of the century was centered around the large sums of capital required for the development. His packing house and ranching empire appear to have had first call on his financial resources at this time. Later the use of natural gas in Calgary, the discovery of the Turner Valley oil field, and the demands of World War I distracted interest from the scheme.<sup>69</sup>

Over the years, work was undertaken to start mining on the property. Equipment was freighted out to the mountainous country sixty-five miles west of Okotoks and exploratory shafts sunk. Around 1910, and after, Burns hoped to build a railway to the location. A railway charter was obtained (the Calgary and South Western), and portions of a right-of-way secured through the country. Some of the ranch lands Burns bought in the Sheep Creek area in 1910 and after, were obtained to secure land along the proposed route of the railway. Land just south of Calgary was designated as the site of the coal yards, and a townsite was laid out at the mining location.<sup>70</sup>

Around 1912, Jack Dempsey, foreman of four of Pat Burns' ranches

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 Kelly is now (1962) President of Burns & Co. Limited).

<sup>68</sup> Interview Mr. J. Howard Kelly of Calgary, August 1, 1956.

<sup>69</sup> Information in this paragraph is based on an interview with Mr. Ed Hoschka of Calgary, March 3, 1956. (As an employee of the Bow Valley Ranch, Mr. Hoschka was in touch with matters).

<sup>70</sup> Interview Mr. Ed Hoschka of Calgary, March 3, 1956.



sented a net profit, the figure would have been indicative of the usual balance sheet of the company.<sup>61</sup>

Labor unrest, a feature of the immediate post-war years, made itself felt at the Calgary packing house in 1920. In the latter part of July, a large number of men were out on strike to back demands for higher wages.<sup>62</sup> It has been recorded that Burns paid his executives well, but some of his executives felt that he underestimated the value of common labor.<sup>63</sup> There was, however, an enviable relationship between Patrick Burns and the hard core of his employees. He was always accessible, knew them by name,<sup>64</sup> and called them his "bize" (boys).<sup>65</sup>

The depression of the early 1920's would seem to have played some part in the shelving of a coal mining scheme Patrick Burns had pursued for many years. In 1904, for a reported \$320,000, he secured control of 16,000 acres of bituminous coal lands lying in the region of the headwaters of Sheep Creek south-west of Calgary.<sup>66</sup> Men by the names of Julius Rickert and John Brown appear to have aroused his interests in the deposits.<sup>67</sup> In later years, a mining engineer named

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<sup>61</sup>Houston, op. cit., p. 190. (It is said that this is the only time P. Burns and Co. ever suffered a loss on a year's operations. See Calgary Albertan, May 11, 1928, p. 16).

<sup>62</sup>Calgary Daily Herald; July 14, 1920; July 31, 1920.

<sup>63</sup>Tighe's Notes, p. 40.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid.

<sup>65</sup>Correspondence Mr. Norman Hindsley of Granby, P.Q. (Mr. Hindsley was Treasurer and a Director of the firm for many years).

<sup>66</sup>Macleod Gazette, September 9, 1904.

<sup>67</sup>Interview Mr. J. Howard Kelly of Calgary, August 1, 1956. (Mr.





the workings. Burns and the mining engineer, Alex Sharpe, entered a horizontal shaft carrying open lamps. A gas explosion followed, bowling the two out through the entrance. Burns rolled some distance more than his companion and as the two men dusted themselves off, Burns wryly remarked, "To be sure, if you were as fat as me, you would have rolled further."<sup>75</sup>

Despite the difficulties and disappointments brought about by the post war slump, Patrick Burns remained optimistic. From time to time he offered the cattlemen encouragement and advice.<sup>76</sup> In an effort to find a wider market for cattle in the early 1920's, the P. Burns firm established an export agency in Yokahama, Japan.<sup>77</sup> One report gives the impression that this venture was a pioneer effort to open markets there.<sup>78</sup> The new outlet enjoyed success for some time, but after several years, circumstances brought about its abandonment.

Competition from sources of supply closer to Japan was difficult to meet, and the pirating of one of Burns' trade-marks ~~by a Japanese firm~~ proved a serious annoyance.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>75</sup>A story told by Mr. Herb Clark of Calgary in an interview on October 6, 1956.

<sup>76</sup>Calgary Daily Herald: October 31, 1921; October 1, 1922, p. 6; December 15, 1923, p. 14; Calgary Morning Albertan, April 4, 1923.

<sup>77</sup>Tighe's Notes, p. 33; Calgary Daily Herald, October 13, 1923. (An advertisement).

<sup>78</sup>Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture of the Province of Alberta for the Year 1924 (Edmonton: King's Printer, 1925), p. 11. (The Burns firm is not identified by name).

<sup>79</sup>Tighe's Notes, p. 33.





Another agency was maintained at Genoa, Italy, in the early 1920's<sup>80</sup> and later one was opened in the West Indies.<sup>81</sup> It would seem that P. Burns and Company did not have to be invited to find new markets for Canadian agricultural products.

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<sup>80</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, October 13, 1923. (An advertisement).

<sup>81</sup>Calgary Albertan, May 11, 1928, p. 18.



## CHAPTER VIII

### NEW FIELDS BECKON

In 1920 or thereabouts, Patrick Burns secured a packing house in Seattle, Washington.<sup>1</sup> The business had been established in 1912 when Greer I.C. Barton, a Canadian by birth, took over the Seattle interests of the Yakima Sheep Company.<sup>2</sup> He formed the firm of Barton & Company and operated a plant with a daily capacity of one hundred cattle, five hundred sheep and six hundred hogs.<sup>3</sup> Prior to coming to Seattle, Greer Barton had been in the Yukon having gone there from Manitoba in the gold rush of 1898.<sup>4</sup> For a time he looked after Burns' meat interests at Dawson.<sup>5</sup>

Burns did not operate the Seattle plant under his own name but as Barton & Company.<sup>6</sup> Leonard Gates, one of his Alberta employees,

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<sup>1</sup>Interview Mr. J. Howard Kelly of Calgary, August 30, 1961. (Mr. Kelly is the President of Burns & Co. Limited). The uncertainty of the date stems from the fact that none of the people interviewed by the writer were ever involved in the operations of the plant. Other attempts to establish the exact date have failed.

<sup>2</sup>Information supplied by the Seattle Public Library.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>A letter in the possession of Mr. John J. Tighe of Calgary.

<sup>6</sup>Information obtained from typewritten notes compiled by Mr. John J. Tighe of Calgary, a long-time employee of Burns. (Hereinafter referred to as "Tighe's Notes").



was sent to Seattle to take part in the management of the business.<sup>7</sup> Burns was unsuccessful in extending his operations into the United States. After four years he terminated the enterprise.<sup>8</sup> The depressed conditions of the early 1920's may have been a factor in the action, but one observer says it was because of the "determined efforts on the part of the American packers that no one north of the border should invade that field."<sup>9</sup>

In the summer of 1923, amid the difficulties of the post war recession, Burns secured the large Glengarry Ranch. The Calgary Daily Herald said that his action was "indicative of the faith and confidence he has in the west...".<sup>10</sup> The Glengarry Ranch was commonly called the "44" as that was its well known cattle brand. The ranch was obtained from Investments Registry of London, England, in exchange for the five storey Burns Building<sup>11</sup> on the south-west corner of Eighth Avenue and Second Street East in Calgary. A value of \$400,000 was placed on each property.<sup>12</sup> At this time the ranch consisted of 22,000 acres of deeded land and approximately 6,000 acres

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<sup>7</sup>Information obtained from Mr. Phil S. Bossard of Calgary, August 28, 1956. (Mr. Bossard rode for Burns and was acquainted with Gates.)

<sup>8</sup>Tighe's Notes, p. 22.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, June 8, 1923.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., June 7, 1923.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., June 8, 1923.





of lease.<sup>13</sup>

As the Glengarry Ranch was one of Alberta's oldest and best known properties, its history should be briefly recounted. It appears to have been started in 1885 when Mr. A.B. Macdonald formed a ranching company<sup>14</sup> and secured a lease of 52,320 acres<sup>15</sup> in the foothills west of where Claresholm later appeared. In 1889, the railroad contractors, Mackenzie and Mann,<sup>16</sup> and perhaps Holt,<sup>17</sup> purchased the ranch from its original backers and retained A.B. Macdonald as manager.<sup>18</sup> Investments Registry purchased the ranch in 1913.<sup>19</sup>

Patrick Burns' large-scale entry into the manufacture of butter and cheese and the handling of eggs and poultry is the important part of his story in the early 1920's. His endeavours in these fields is an example of the way the man turned to other opportunities when his customary enterprises were in the doldrums. In view of the setbacks the cattle trade and the meat packing business experienced at this time, it should be explained that the capital required for the

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<sup>13</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, June 7, 1923.

<sup>14</sup>L.V. Kelly, The Range Men (Toronto: Briggs, 1913), p. 185. (Kelly's material is loosely arranged making dates difficult to establish).

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 196.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 132.

<sup>17</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, June 8, 1923.

<sup>18</sup>Kelly, op. cit., p. 232.

<sup>19</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, June 8, 1923.



bulk of the new expansion program was raised through a bond issue.<sup>20</sup>

P. Burns and Company had dabbled in butter production for several years. Provincial records show that the Burns firm operated a creamery in Calgary in 1909,<sup>21</sup> but no further mention of creamery operations in Alberta appear for another ten years. Another source indicates that the company possessed two creameries in 1914, one at the Calgary plant, the other at Vancouver.<sup>22</sup> The same source states that the firm had handled poultry and eggs for a long period.<sup>23</sup>

A long-time employee of P. Burns and Company, Mr. John J. Tighe, writes that as the demand for its butter increased, the company found it necessary to augment its own supply by buying the output of other creameries. This procedure proved unsatisfactory as it was not possible to maintain uniform quality when butter was secured from diverse sources. As the reputation of the Burns product was imperiled, Patrick Burns decided to build and buy a chain of creameries so that unified management and standardized production methods would

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<sup>20</sup>A clipping in the Calgary Public Library that is not dated or identified but which is supported by other evidence. See: W.R. Houston (editor), Annual Financial Review Canadian, Vol. XXIV (Toronto: Houston's, 1924), p. 190.

<sup>21</sup>Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture of the Province of Alberta 1909 (Edmonton: Government Printer, 1910), p. 73. (Hereinafter referred to as "D.A.P.A.").

<sup>22</sup>Tighe's Notes, pp. 31 and 32.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 32.



produce butter of uniform quality.<sup>24</sup>

Mr. Tighe also explains why the Burns firm began the manufacture of cheese. Production in Western Canada was not constant because dairy farmers tended to switch from the sale of milk for cheese, to cream for butter, and vice versa, with every major change in price. There was also the difficulty of securing sufficient Cheddar cheese to fill Western Canadian orders. The production of Cheddar was practically confined to Eastern Canada, and the sale of the product to Britain was encouraged as it constituted part of a program to build up exports to that country. In defiance of the belief that good Canadian Cheddar could only be produced in Eastern Canada, Patrick Burns prepared to establish his own sources of supply.<sup>25</sup>

The move to improve the situation in respect to the handling of butter appears to have started in 1918 when the company opened a creamery at Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan.<sup>26</sup> In 1919 creameries were opened in Calgary and Edmonton in Alberta,<sup>27</sup> and in the same year or early in 1920, creameries were established in Prince Albert and Saskatoon

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<sup>24</sup>Tighe's Notes, p. 32.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>26</sup>Fourteenth Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture of the Province of Saskatchewan for the Twelve Months Ending April 30, 1919. (Regina: King's Printer, 1919), p. 280. (Hereinafter referred to as "D.A.P.S.").

<sup>27</sup>D.A.P.A., 1919, p. 22.





in Saskatchewan.<sup>28</sup> In 1921, or early 1922, a creamery was opened in Regina, but it appears to have operated only a year or so.<sup>29</sup> An Alberta directory for 1920 lists Burns creameries at Bruderheim, Chauvin, Holden, Innisfree, Lamont, Pinburn and Walsh.<sup>30</sup> In 1922, the directory lists additional creameries at Kitscoty, Korinville, Waskatenau, and Westlock but makes no mention of creameries at Chauvin or Walsh.<sup>31</sup> The variations in the listings of the Burns creameries can be explained. Certain districts were tested out and either developed or abandoned as their possibilities were demonstrated.<sup>32</sup>

The venture into cheese making was taken in 1921, when the firm established a factory in connection with its Edmonton packing plant.<sup>33</sup> In 1922, additional cheese factories were established at Round Hill, Rossington, and New Norway.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>D.A.P.S., 1920, p. 311. (The fact that the yearly record ends as of April 30 makes the dates uncertain).

<sup>29</sup>D.A.P.S., 1922, p. 21. (No mention of the Regina plant is made in later reports).

<sup>30</sup>Wrigley's Alberta Directory 1920 (Vancouver: Wrigley Directories, Ltd., 1920), pp. 729-730.

<sup>31</sup>Wrigley's Alberta Directory 1922 (Vancouver: Wrigley Directories, Ltd., 1922), p. 751.

<sup>32</sup>Tighe's Notes, p. 32.

<sup>33</sup>D.A.P.A., 1921, p. 18.

<sup>34</sup>D.A.P.A., 1922, p. 26.



A comparison of information from various sources presents the picture for 1923. In Alberta, new creameries were opened at Forestburg, Hardisty, Mannville, Pincher Creek, Rimbey, and Lethbridge.<sup>35</sup> In Saskatchewan, a plant was started at Macklin.<sup>36</sup> A creamery is listed for Vancouver, but it had been in operation since 1913.<sup>37</sup> Places no longer listed as having creameries include Bruderheim, Innisfree, Kitscoty, Lamont, Minburn, Morinville, Waskateneau, and Westlock. In Alberta, new cheese factories were opened at Bawlf and Metiskow, but the Edmonton plant reverted to being a creamery.<sup>38</sup> In Saskatchewan, a cheese factory was opened at Indian Head, and at Moose Jaw creamery operations were broadened to include cheese production.<sup>39</sup> As of October 13, 1923, the Burns firm claimed to operate twenty-one plants in Alberta, Saskatchewan and British Columbia.<sup>40</sup>

On May 13, 1924, it was announced that all the creameries

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<sup>35</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, October 13, 1923. (An advertisement). Rimbey and Lethbridge are not mentioned in D.A.P.A., 1923, p. 33.

<sup>36</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, October 13, 1923; D.A.P.S. 1924, p. 19.

<sup>37</sup>Province of British Columbia Eighth and Ninth Reports of the Department of Agriculture for the Years 1913 and 1914 (Victoria: King's Printer, 1915), p. R55.

<sup>38</sup>D.A.P.A., 1923, p. 33; Calgary Daily Herald, October 13, 1923.

<sup>39</sup>D.A.P.S., 1924, p. 27.

<sup>40</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, October 13, 1923.



and cheese factories of the Edmonton City Dairy had been purchased by P. Burns and Company.<sup>41</sup> The Edmonton City Dairy (E.C.D.) retained its milk distribution system, its ice cream facilities, and its egg and poultry branch.<sup>42</sup> The amount of money involved in the transaction was placed at being near \$400,000.<sup>43</sup> The E.C.D. branches that were taken over included some plants that were owned outright, and others which were run on a co-operative basis with the producers in the districts where the plants were located.<sup>44</sup>

The fourteen company-owned plants which the E.C.D. sold to Burns were located at Daysland, Delburne, Grande Prairie, Innisfree, Kitscoty, Kinsella, Leduc, Millet, Monitor, Stettler, Vermillion, Westlock, Rocky Mountain House, and St. Paul de Metis.<sup>45</sup> The nine co-operative plants where the Burns firm replaced the E.C.D. were located at Bruderheim, Hay Lakes, Hoadley, Irma, Wainwright, Ponoka, Peace River, Sedgewick, and Wetaskiwin.<sup>46</sup>

Elsewhere in Alberta in 1924, P. Burns and Company appears to have opened new creameries at Norinville, Sangudo, Waskatenau,<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>Edmonton Bulletin, May 13, 1924, p. 3.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., (The report does not distinguish creameries from cheese factories).

<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid.

<sup>47</sup>Henderson's Alberta Gazeteer and Directory 1924 (Winnipeg: Henderson Directories Ltd., 1924), p. 744. (Previous issues of the Gazeteer have not been available).





and Camrose.<sup>48</sup> The cheese factory at Metiskow was converted to a creamery.<sup>49</sup> In Saskatchewan, the creamery at Regina was not opened, the combined creamery and cheese plant at Moose Jaw was sold, and the cheese factory at Indian Head was closed.<sup>50</sup> Cheese making was never resumed by P. Burns and Company in Saskatchewan.<sup>51</sup> It could be assumed that the factories in Saskatchewan had proven uneconomical, or that the Alberta plants of P. Burns were now adequate to take care of his needs.

At the end of 1924, it would seem that P. Burns and Company operated a total of forty-four plants, an increase of twenty-three over 1923. The developments of 1924 would probably have doubled the output of butter and cheese for the firm. The company must certainly have become the largest butter producer in Canada, for this position had been claimed by the Edmonton City Dairy before it sold its creameries to P. Burns.<sup>52</sup> In 1923, the E.C.D. was said to have had a turnover of "between five and six million pounds of butter"<sup>53</sup> and cheese production was "nearly one million pounds."<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>Edmonton Bulletin, July 7, 1924. (Reference to creamery at Camrose).

<sup>49</sup>D.A.P.A., 1924, p. 50.

<sup>50</sup>D.A.P.S., 1924, p. 27; D.A.P.S., 1925, p. 27.

<sup>51</sup>D.A.P.S. for the years 1925 ff.

<sup>52</sup>Edmonton Journal, May 12, 1924, p. 6.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., May 12, 1924, p. 6.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid.



The yearly Alberta operations of the P. Burns firm in butter and cheese cannot be followed with proper accuracy for the balance of the 1920's.<sup>55</sup> The following information seems to check out satisfactorily but it is not regarded as complete. In 1925, creameries were opened at Nanton and Acme. It would seem that the creamery at Hoadley and the cheese plant at Rossington did not re-open.<sup>56</sup> In 1926, it would seem that the creameries at Fardisty and Irma did not re-open<sup>57</sup> and in 1927 cheese making was discontinued at New Norway.<sup>58</sup> In 1928 a creamery was opened at Clandonald, but the plant at Lethbridge was closed.<sup>59</sup> At some time prior to 1928, P. Burns and Company may have opened plants at Berwyn, Leduc, Radway Centre, and Vegreville.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>Every year some plants were closed or new ones opened as the potentials of various rural areas were tested. Provincial records are far from satisfactory, particularly in determining what happened to those plants operated on a co-operative basis.

<sup>56</sup>D.A.P.A., 1925, pp. 55 and 57.

<sup>57</sup>D.A.P.A., 1926, p. 47.

<sup>58</sup>D.A.P.A., 1927, p. 23.

<sup>59</sup>D.A.P.A., 1928, p. 110. (Burns and Company replaced P. Burns and Company in May, 1928, but this record uses the latter name).

<sup>60</sup>Henderson's Province of Alberta Directory 1928-29 (Winnipeg: Henderson Directories Ltd., 1928), p. 685. (The creameries are listed under the new name of the firm, "Burns and Company". It is likely they were operated by P. Burns and Co. before it was sold in May, 1928. Directories such as the one quoted here have not been available for the previous years).



In British Columbia and Saskatchewan, P. Burns and Company experienced further expansions after 1924. In Saskatchewan, a creamery was opened at Macrorie in 1925, or early 1926,<sup>61</sup> and at Kelvington in June, 1926.<sup>62</sup> On April 1, 1927, the firm took over Northland Creameries Ltd., which operated creameries at Mervin, Maidstone, and St. Walburg,<sup>63</sup> but closed the Maidstone plant the same year.<sup>64</sup> Later in 1927, and early in 1928, creameries were opened at Balcarres, Nakomis, Sheko, Medstead, and North Battleford.<sup>65</sup> As of May 1, 1928, P. Burns and Company were operating eleven creameries in Saskatchewan.<sup>66</sup> In British Columbia, the firm opened three more creameries after 1924. In 1926, a creamery was opened at Vernon,<sup>67</sup> and in 1927 creameries were opened at Kamloops and Grand Forks.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>D.A.P.S., 1926, p. 22.

<sup>62</sup>D.A.P.S., 1927, p. 21.

<sup>63</sup>D.A.P.S., 1927, p. 21.

<sup>64</sup>D.A.P.S., 1928, p. 286.

<sup>65</sup>D.A.P.S., 1928, pp. 277 and 286. (P. Burns & Co. Ltd. still existed as of April 30, 1928).

<sup>66</sup>D.A.P.S., 1928, p. 286. (P. Burns & Co. Ltd. still existed as of May 1, 1928, although the reports state "Burns and Company").

<sup>67</sup>Province of British Columbia Twenty-First Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture for the Year 1926 (Victoria: King's Printer, 1927), p. N108.

<sup>68</sup>Province of British Columbia Twenty-Second Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture for the Year 1927 (Victoria: King's Printer, 1928), p. 0124.





In Alberta, P. Burns and Company won an impressive share of the total production of creamery butter. In 1924, the firm produced a record of 7,676,000 pounds of creamery butter or 34.4 per cent of the total.<sup>69</sup> In 1925, it had 35.2 per cent of the total production, and in 1926, its share was 36.2 per cent. In 1927, the manufacture of 5,947,000 pounds of creamery butter gave the company a record 36.8 per cent of the total provincial production.<sup>70</sup>

In respect to cheese production in Alberta, the firm produced a record 1,375,000 pounds in 1924 or 80.1 per cent of the total production. In 1925, 1926, and 1927, the company had 78.1, 70.4 and 77.5 per cent of the respective total production of each year.<sup>71</sup>

P. Burns and Company found it necessary to combat some of the problems which often made the creamery business an uncertainty to both parties involved. Many farmers had inferior milch cows, and were unskilled in the handling of milk and cream. Some would let their cows go dry in winter or otherwise fail to care for them in such a way as to make dairying profitable. If the price of beef went up, some producers would sell their hybrid herds for butchering purposes.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>69</sup>Chester F. Prevey, "The Development of the Dairy Industry of Alberta" (unpublished Master of Arts thesis, University of Toronto, 1950), pp. 218-220. (A copy is available in the Rutherford Library of the University of Alberta, Edmonton).

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., p. 218 and 220.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., p. 222. (The writer has worked out the per centage figures from information supplied by Prevey).

<sup>72</sup>Tighe's Notes, p. 34.



In order to discourage these practices, the company bought purebred Jersey and Holstein cows, and sold them to the dairy farmers at cost, and on long terms of payment. Well-bred bulls were bought, and the establishment of co-operative bull rings encouraged. Finally, field men were made available to assist the producers learn those methods which would make them better dairy farmers.<sup>73</sup>

The period of P. Burns and Company's greatest expansion as a producer of butter and cheese was in 1923 and 1924. This development seems due in part to the fact that the livestock industry was in a post-war slump, whereas the demand and price for butter and cheese was sufficient to merit expansion.<sup>74</sup> In 1924, a recovery in the Canadian economy became evident, and prosperity mounted yearly until the crash of October, 1929.<sup>75</sup> By 1926, Burns was again ready to expand his packing house interests to take advantage of the rising prosperity.

The province which had lured him to the West forty-eight years before attracted him again. At Winnipeg, Manitoba, he bought the facilities of the pioneer packers, Gallagher-Holman, Ltd.<sup>76</sup> In connection with the same transaction, he secured a wholesale distributing outlet at Fort William, and a small packing house at Montreal

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<sup>73</sup>Tighe's Notes, p. 34.

<sup>74</sup>This impression is gained from the Department of Agriculture reports for Alberta during the 1920's.

<sup>75</sup>Arthur M. Lower, Colony to Nation (Toronto: Longmans, Green and Co.), p. 496.

<sup>76</sup>Calgary Herald, May 10, 1928, p. 1. (In earlier years the firm was known as Gallagher, Holman and Lafrance).





which was very soon disposed of.<sup>77</sup>

The acquisition of the packing plant in Manitoba is indicative of what Burns was tempted to do at this time. He entered negotiations to purchase the packing house facilities of two large Eastern Canadian firms: Gunns, Limited, and The Wm. Davies Co. Ltd.<sup>78</sup> The addition of their plants would have firmly entrenched P. Burns and Company across the breadth of Canada.<sup>79</sup> The gigantic deal was as good as closed when Patrick Burns decided it was too big for him and ordered it stopped.<sup>80</sup>

If the seventy-two-year old Patrick Burns was becoming cautious in expanding his packing house empire, he still was inclined to try his hand in another field. Around 1926,<sup>81</sup> it was decided that the firm should investigate fluid milk distribution and ice cream manufacture and marketing. A creamery and ice cream factory at Palmerston, Ontario, operating under the name of Palm Creameries and using the word "Palm" as its trademark was purchased.<sup>82</sup> The plant was used as a testing and training centre for two years and then resold to the

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<sup>77</sup>Tighe's Notes, p. 21.

<sup>78</sup>Interview Mr. J. Howard Kelly of Calgary, August 1, 1956. (Mr. Kelly is now (1962) President of Burns & Co. Limited).

<sup>79</sup>Interview Mr. J. Howard Kelly of Calgary, August 1, 1956.

<sup>80</sup>Interview Mr. J. Howard Kelly of Calgary, August 1, 1956.

<sup>81</sup>Interview Mr. N.L. Chapman of Edmonton, August 6, 1961. (Mr. Chapman is a retired executive of the Burns enterprises).

<sup>82</sup>Tighe's Notes, p. 35.





original owners.<sup>83</sup> Having tried the new venture under the severest type of competition in the East, the company was now prepared to start operations in the West.<sup>84</sup> The Palm trademark had been retained, and in the years that followed, the operations of Palm Dairies Limited spread from Sudbury to Victoria.<sup>85</sup>

In 1926, two fruit firms were brought together with the Fruit Department of P. Burns & Co., Limited and became the subsidiary firm known as the Consolidated Fruit Company, Limited.<sup>86</sup> The fruit firms absorbed kept their identities, one being the Scott Fruit Company and the other the National Fruit Company. The Scott Fruit Company was a Winnipeg firm, and controlled branch companies of that name in Calgary and Brandon.<sup>87</sup> The National Fruit Company had control of the Scott National Company of Medicine Hat, the Victoria Fruit Company of Edmonton, and the Berrington National Fruit Company of Nelson.<sup>88</sup> Herbert C. Stockton of the National Fruit Company became the first president of the Consolidated Fruit Company, Limited.<sup>89</sup> By 1928,

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<sup>83</sup>Tighe's Notes, p. 35.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid.

<sup>85</sup>Further details are not given as P. Burns & Co. Limited was sold in the spring of 1928. Palm Dairies Limited was incorporated later that year by the new firm, Burns & Co. Limited.

<sup>86</sup>Information in the files of the Companies Branch, Edmonton.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid.

<sup>89</sup>Tighe's Notes, p. 37.



the fruit houses numbered about fifteen. The additional outlets were located at Yorkton, Peace River, Grande Prairie, Cranbrook, and Fernie.<sup>90</sup>

In 1927, Patrick Burns made a transaction which would have been the ambition of any rancher's heart. On November 10 of that year, it was reported that he had purchased two ranches owned by the late George Lane: the large Bar U,<sup>91</sup> and the lesser sized Flying E.<sup>92</sup> The Bar U Ranch centered on a branch of the Highwood River called Pekisko Creek in the foothills country south-west of High River, Alberta. At this time, it was reported to have 36,000 acres of deeded land and around 55,000 acres of lease.<sup>93</sup> The Flying E Ranch, otherwise known as the "Willow Creek", centered on the stream of that name in the foothills country west of Stavely, Alberta. The size of this ranch is not known at this date, but in later years it contained 10,293 acres of deeded lands and 13,408 acres of lease.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>90</sup>Interview Mr. N.L. Chapman of Edmonton, August 6, 1961. (A retired executive of the firm).

<sup>91</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, November 10, 1927.

<sup>92</sup>The newspaper report does not mention the Flying E Ranch but it was obtained at the same time.

<sup>93</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, November 10, 1937. (The acreages reported by the paper may be inaccurate. Files maintained by the trustees of the late Senator Patrick Burns show that in 1937 the Bar U consisted of 27,359.10 acres of deeded lands and 41,150.49 acres of lease).

<sup>94</sup>Information contained in the files of the Burns estate give these figures for the year 1937.



Burns' purchase of these two ranches increased his holdings by about 110,000 acres.<sup>95</sup> The sale included the transfer of around 6,000 head of cattle and 500 horses.<sup>96</sup> The newspaper report stated that the ranch transaction would cost Burns in the neighbourhood of \$750,000.<sup>97</sup>

Some mention of the history of the two ranches and of the career of George Lane must be made. The Bar U Ranch begins its story in 1881 when the North-West Cattle Company was formed by the Allan Company of Montreal -- the proprietors of the steamship company of that name.<sup>98</sup> The North-West Cattle Company secured a lease of 59,000 acres in 1882,<sup>99</sup> and as the assignee of Fred S. Stimson, obtained another 55,000 acres in 1883.<sup>100</sup> In 1886, the Mount Head Rancho Company amalgamated with the North-West Cattle Company<sup>101</sup> adding another 44,000 acres of lease.<sup>102</sup> The company now had 158,000 acres under

<sup>95</sup>A compromise figure arrived at from the newspaper report and the information for 1937.

<sup>96</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, November 10, 1927.

<sup>97</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, November 10, 1927. (The sum mentioned probably included the cost of the Flying W Ranch).

<sup>98</sup>Kenneth Koppock, "Early Ranching Days in Canadian West", Canadian Cattlemen, (Vol. 1, No. 1, June, 1938), p. 40.

<sup>99</sup>Canada, Sessional Papers, Volume 12, Session of 1886, Sessional Paper 20b (Ottawa: MacLean, Roger & Co., n.d.), p. 2.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid.

<sup>101</sup>L.V. Kelly, The Range Men (Toronto: Wm. Briggs, 1913), pp. 166-167.

<sup>102</sup>Canada, Sessional Papers, Volume 12, Session of 1886, Sessional Paper 20b (Ottawa: MacLean, Roger & Co., n.d.), p. 2.





lease making it one of the largest in the West. Fred S. Stimson was appointed manager of the ranch, a position he retained during the twenty-one years the Allan family engaged in ranching.<sup>103</sup> The North-West Cattle Company's brand, the  $\bar{U}$ , was filed in Alberta's first brand book as Entry No. 37 on January 11, 1882.<sup>104</sup>

George Lane was born near Des Moines, Iowa on March 6, 1856.<sup>105</sup> He came to Alberta in 1884,<sup>106</sup> and took a job as foreman of the Bar U Ranch.<sup>107</sup> Here he remained for five or six years, after which time he left to establish himself as a cattle buyer.<sup>108</sup> In 1891, and 1892, he was associated with Burns in supplying beef to the Indians of the Blood Indian Reserve.<sup>109</sup> Following this experience, he bought his first ranch, the Flying E.<sup>110</sup> The property had been held by the Victor Ranche Company operated by McDermid and Ross,<sup>111</sup> but it is not

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<sup>103</sup>Throughout the period Stimson's position is so stated in newspaper reports.

<sup>104</sup>The hand written brand book is kept in the Provincial Library Edmonton. It contains those brands registered in the years 1880-1883.

<sup>105</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, January 24, 1925.

<sup>106</sup>Ibid. (Some reports state the year 1883 but this was just a visit).

<sup>107</sup>The Macleod Gazette, March 28, 1885. (The paper identifies him as the foreman of the ranch).

<sup>108</sup>Kelly, op. cit., pp. 231-260.

<sup>109</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, September 24, 1925.

<sup>110</sup>Kelly, op. cit., p. 266.

<sup>111</sup>Macleod Gazette, January 2, 1890. (A brand advertisement).



clear whether Lane bought it directly from them.<sup>112</sup> The cattle brand from which the Flying E got its name was also formerly used by the Victor Ranche Company.<sup>113</sup>

In 1898, Mr. Lane founded his YT Ranch on the Little Bow<sup>114</sup> near the present town of Champion. It was here that he laid the foundations of a very successful Percheron horse breeding program designed to supply heavy horses to the farmers of Western Canada.<sup>115</sup> As the years passed, Lane's horses won championship ribbons in the horse shows of North America and Europe.<sup>116</sup> Buyers from near and far came to secure his horses.

Early in 1902, George Lane, in partnership with the Winnipeg firm of Gordon, Ironside and Fares bought the Bar U Ranch from the Allan family for a sum of over \$200,000.<sup>117</sup> In the years that followed, Lane secured large grazing leases around Bassano and Brooks,<sup>118</sup> and

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<sup>112</sup>The Victor cattle were sold to Holt, Mann, and Hull Bros. according to the June 18, 1891 issue of the Macleod Gazette. It is not until the December 8, 1893 issue of the Macleod Gazette that one reads that "Geo. Lane and family of High River, have moved to the Victor Ranche, I suppose it will be his future home...."

<sup>113</sup>Macleod Gazette, January 2, 1890. (A brand advertisement).

<sup>114</sup>Kelly, op. cit., p. 316.

<sup>115</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, January 24, 1925.

<sup>116</sup>Ibid.

<sup>117</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, February 5, 1902.

<sup>118</sup>Ibid., September 24, 1925.



bought the 14,000 acre "Namaka Farm".<sup>119</sup> In the early 1920's, he secured the Bar U Ranch in his own name.<sup>120</sup> It was George Lane who was instrumental in interesting the Prince of Wales in establishing his E. P. Ranch. On September 24, 1925, George Lane died at his home on the Bar U Ranch.<sup>121</sup>

The purchase of the Bar U and the Flying E may have helped Patrick Burns to arrive at one of the biggest decisions of his life. Burns was now in his seventy-fourth year, and the administration of the new ranches, in addition to those he already operated, may have seemed like a pleasant way to spend his remaining years. Exactly seven months elapse between the announcement of the purchase of the ranches and the announcement that his packing house and allied industries had passed from his control. Did Burns need a rest after his years of heavy responsibilities? He had experienced illnesses which must have brought home to him the fact that he too was mortal. In the winter of 1925-26, he was critically ill with pneumonia.<sup>122</sup> In these latter years he had to contend with the effects of diabetes,

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<sup>119</sup>C.I. Ritchie, "George Lane -- One of the 'Big Four'", Canadian Cattlemen, (Vol. 3, No. 2, September, 1940), p. 415. (Ritchie has made several errors in his article but his sources were also inaccurate).

<sup>120</sup>Ibid.

<sup>121</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, September 24, 1925.

<sup>122</sup>Free Press Prairie Farmer, December 29, 1926.





and he was taking daily injections of insulin.<sup>123</sup>

Who would take over the reins when Patrick Burns died? His position was not enviable considering what was at stake. At this time his son Michael was only twenty-one years old and was still undergoing his education. It would be several years before he could be expected to shoulder the grave responsibilities of his father's business empire. One might speculate whether Patrick Burns saw in his son the qualities he thought necessary to continue his work. If he did not, he may have felt it wise to sell at least part of his vast interests. Finally, one might wonder whether Patrick Burns wanted or needed the money he would realize from the sale of some of his enterprises. The answer would appear to be no, although he probably had little ready cash in contrast to the value of his business. At the time of his decision to realize on his assets, no one could see that grave problems would shortly disturb the economic health of the world. Burns' business was running smoothly and at a profit.

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<sup>123</sup>Interview Miss Kathleen Ellis of Penticton, August 18, 1955. (Miss Ellis was Mrs. P. Burns' sister).



## CHAPTER IX

### THE FINAL YEARS

On May 10, 1928, it was announced that P. Burns & Company, Limited had been sold to the Dominion Securities Corporation Limited of Toronto.<sup>1</sup> After that time the business was conducted under the name of "Burns & Co., Limited." The new firm retained all the packing plants and allied industries of the old with the exception that the ranches operated by the latter now became the personal property of Patrick Burns.<sup>2</sup>

The facilities which changed hands included the packing houses and wholesale outlets located at Calgary, Vancouver, Edmonton, Prince Albert, Regina and Winnipeg; wholesale branches at White Horse, Victoria, Nelson, Vernon, Lethbridge, Moose Jaw, Saskatoon, Kenora, Fort William and Montreal;<sup>3</sup> ninety-five meat markets in Alberta, British Columbia and the Yukon;<sup>4</sup> about fifteen wholesale fruit houses in the four western provinces;<sup>5</sup> more than forty cream-

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<sup>1</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, May 10, 1928, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Interview Mr. John J. Tighe of Calgary, July 8, 1956.  
(A retired employee of the firm).

<sup>3</sup>Calgary Albertan, May 11, 1928, p. 18; Calgary Daily Herald, May 10, 1928, p. 11. (The information may have been out of date. Mr. J. Howard Kelly, President of Burns & Co. Limited, suggests that Kamloops be substituted for Vernon).

<sup>4</sup>Calgary Albertan, May 11, 1928, p. 18.

<sup>5</sup>Interview Mr. N.L. Chapman of Edmonton, August 8, 1961.  
(A retired manager of the Edmonton fruit interests).



eries and cheese factories in Saskatchewan, <sup>Alberta,</sup> and British Columbia;<sup>6</sup> fluid milk and ice cream plants;<sup>7</sup> and export agencies in Europe, the West Indies, and the Orient.<sup>8</sup> Newspaper accounts set the amount of money involved in the sale at about \$15,000,000<sup>9</sup> but actually Mr. Burns "was paid \$9,671,000 less \$4,038,000 which he paid for the ranches he retained."<sup>10</sup> Subtracting the latter figure from the former one arrives at the sum of \$5,633,000. Mr. John Burns, general manager of the old firm, became president and general manager of the new firm while Mr. W.J. "Blake" Wilson served as vice-president.<sup>11</sup>

The new company departed from the practices of the old in important ways. First, it owned no ranches from which to draw a portion of its meat supply. Secondly, it retained the meat markets and creameries for only a few years.<sup>12</sup> The extensive re-capitalization carried out by those who launched the new company in 1928 was to prove unfortunate to those investors who retained their interests following

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<sup>6</sup>Calgary Albertan, May 11, 1928, p. 18.

<sup>7</sup>Interview Mr. J. Howard Kelly, President of Burns & Co. Limited, August 30, 1961. (These facilities were organized by the new company as Palm Dairies Limited).

<sup>8</sup>Calgary Albertan, May 11, 1928, p. 18.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 1.

<sup>10</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, June 4, 1934, p. 1.

<sup>11</sup>Calgary Albertan, May 11, 1928, p. 1.

<sup>12</sup>Interview Mr. J. Howard Kelly, President of Burns & Co. Limited, August 30, 1961.





the onslaught of the Great Depression, for the firm was unable to meet its heavy commitments.<sup>13</sup> Many investors who were unaware of the relationship of Patrick Burns to the new firm blamed their predicament on him.<sup>14</sup> Although he served as chairman of the board of directors and had some interest in the company, his position was not comparable to the previous one where he was president and owned a very large percentage of the firm.<sup>15</sup> Few realized how the turn of events shocked and grieved Pat Burns. Pride and sentiment stirred curiously in the man. Rather than see the product of his labours collapse and knowing that he had little chance to recover his money during his lifetime he re-invested approximately two million dollars in the faltering firm.<sup>16</sup> After an extensive reorganization in 1933-34, followed by years of careful guidance, the company recovered.<sup>17</sup>

Patrick Burns turned much of his attention to his ranches after the sale of his packing house interests. In 1928, he bought a herd of high grade Hereford bulls, cows,<sup>and</sup> heifers from the Van Natta-Murdock Company of Lafayette, Indiana.<sup>18</sup> Later, he purchased purebred

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<sup>13</sup>Information obtained from typewritten notes compiled by Mr. J.J. Tighe of Calgary, a long-time employee of the company, p. 39 and 40 of notes. (Hereinafter referred to as "Tighe's Notes").

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Interview Mr. J.H. Kelly, August 1, 1956.

<sup>17</sup>Interview Mr. J.H. Kelly, August 30, 1961.

<sup>18</sup>Canadian Cattlemen (Vol. 1, No. 1, June, 1938), p. 43.



Herefords from A.B. Cook of Townsend, Montana.<sup>19</sup> In improving the quality of his herds he was upholding a principle he had long advocated to livestock men.<sup>20</sup>

In the summer of 1928, he expanded his ranching operations by purchasing the 97,000 acre "76" Ranch and nearly 3,000 head of cattle from Roderick Macleay of Nanton, Alberta.<sup>21</sup> The ranch was located on Frenchman River about thirty miles south-east of Shaunavon, Saskatchewan. To avoid confusion it should be stated that at other times the 76 brand was associated with other ranches of south-western Saskatchewan.

The cattle brand of this ranch, the numeral 76, has a history which may pre-date the majority of the brands of Western Canada. The brand was introduced to Alberta in 1886 when the old Powder River Cattle Company<sup>22</sup> of Wyoming began a short-lived ranching venture where Mosquito Creek empties into the Little Bow River.<sup>23</sup> In the summer

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<sup>19</sup>Canadian Cattlemen (Vol. 1, No. 1, June, 1938), p. 43.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

<sup>21</sup>Information obtained from the files of the Patrick Burns estate, Michael Building, Calgary. (The ranch consisted of leased lands except for one section of deeded property. The great bulk of the ranch lay in Townships 4, 5 and 6, Range 15, and certain lands in Townships 4, 5 and 6, Range 16, West of Meridian 3).

<sup>22</sup>Macleod Gazette, August 24, 1886; November 16, 1886.

<sup>23</sup>\_\_\_\_\_, Lachlin McKinnon, Pioneer 1865-1948 (Calgary: John D. McAra, Printer, 1956), p. 25. (This book is a private publication of the McKinnon family).



of 1888 the Powder River Cattle Company sold all their cattle, horses and other property in Alberta to Sir John Lister-Kaye's<sup>24</sup> Canadian Agricultural, Coal and Colonization Company which operated from several locations in Alberta and Saskatchewan.<sup>25</sup> In the years that followed, Lister-Kaye's company experienced a number of disasters and in 1895<sup>26</sup> it was re-organized as the Canadian Land and Ranche Company.<sup>27</sup> The new company soon confined its operations to southwestern Saskatchewan but by 1909 it too went out of business and sold the Shaunavon ranch to Gordon, Ironside and Fares of Winnipeg.<sup>28</sup> In the early 1920's the ranch became the property of Roderick Macleay of Nanton, Alberta.<sup>29</sup> Just how much, if any, of the 76 Ranch was part of the original Lister-Kaye holdings is not known.<sup>30</sup>

The deal by which Burns secured the 76 Ranch from Rod Macleay was the sequel to earlier transactions between the two men. As the

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<sup>24</sup>Macleod Gazette and Alberta Live Stock Record, August 30, 1888.

<sup>25</sup>Mrs. S.E. Warren, "Some Memories of the Old '76'", Canadian Cattlemen, (Vol. 12, No. 2, September, 1949), pp. 20-21.

<sup>26</sup>Macleod Gazette and Alberta Live Stock Record, May 31, 1895.

<sup>27</sup>Warren, op. cit., p. 21.

<sup>28</sup>Warren, op. cit., p. 21.

<sup>29</sup>Correspondence with Mrs. George Chattaway of Nanton, Alberta. (A daughter of Roderick Macleay).

<sup>30</sup>The writer has the impression that the various Saskatchewan properties of the original Lister-Kaye company were located at intervals not far from the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway. The Shaunavon ranch lay further to the south and may not have been one of the original holdings.





whole story has become garbled with the passage of the years, it should be briefly reviewed. Late in 1918, Macleay arranged to buy from Burns the Bar S Ranch west of Nanton, and the cattle of the Circle Ranch north-east of Brooks. When Macleay took delivery of the cattle in 1919, a dispute arose over the number involved and the matter was taken to the courts. Burns claimed that the agreement with Macleay covered all the Circle Ranch cattle whereas Macleay said that he had bought only those Circle cattle grazing on the Circle Ranch and not an additional 400 yearlings bearing the Circle brand which had been winter feeding on another ranch. When Macleay took the case to the appellate division in 1920, it was dismissed, but his lawyer, R.B. Bennett, K.C., then prepared to appeal the case to the Privy Council in England. However, in June, 1921, about one month before the Privy Council was to hear the case, Mr. Bennett informed his client that a settlement had been reached and the appeal was withdrawn. Macleay now took the additional Circle brand cattle which involved paying the previous court judgment of \$19,274.71, but in return he received a credit from Burns for \$5,000.<sup>31</sup>

The succeeding episodes in the Burns-Macleay transactions have been told as follows:

You might suppose that the two old cattlemen never

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<sup>31</sup>The information in this paragraph was kindly furnished by Mrs. Geo. Chattaway, daughter of the late Roderick Macleay. Her information included a copy of the letter written by R.B. Bennett to Macleay outlining the terms of the settlement. A lengthy account of decision handed down by the appellate division may be found in the July 7, 1920 issue of the Calgary Daily Herald.



spoke to one another again. But they did. They even did business. Each knew the other better now, and they never left any loopholes in their deals. Macleay owed Burns money on the Bar S for years, only making final payment when he sold him the 76 Ranch at Shaunavon.

Macleay was crippled financially by the Circle and Bar S deals, and couldn't get the money from the banks to purchase the 76. Stamping out of a bank after being refused, Macleay ran into Burns at the door.

'How are things going Rod?' inquired Burns.

'Fine, if these so and sos would only let me have some money!'

'What for?' inquired Burns.

'To buy a ranch.'

'In that case, come over to my office and I'll lend it to you.'

And so, Burns loaned Rod the money to buy the 76 from Gordon, Ironside and Fares. In 1928 he didn't want the money, but the ranch, so they made a deal-- and it was in this deal that the Bar S debt was cleared.<sup>32</sup>

In 1928, Burns sold his small ranch properties east of Olds, Alberta. A portion of his lands in this area was too valuable to keep in pasture, and the sale tended to consolidate his ranching activities in Alberta on a sweep of land stretching from Calgary southward to the Walrond Ranch north of Cowley. The Olds lands were divided into farms and sold on terms to new comers to the district.<sup>33</sup>

After the sale of his packing house interests, Burns needed office accommodation in Calgary from which to carry on his remaining

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<sup>32</sup> Extract from a letter received from Mrs. Geo. Chattaway of Nanton. Mrs. Chattaway is a daughter of the late Roderick Macleay. (Mr. Macleay was one of those ranchers who bought land and cattle at a time of peak prices. The post-war slump was undoubtedly a severe blow to his financial position).

<sup>33</sup> Interview Mr. D. Schroeder of the Olds district, August 23, 1956.



interests. In June, 1928, he purchased property on the north-east corner of Ninth Avenue and Third Street West.<sup>34</sup> A building named after his son Michael was erected on the site, and Burns maintained his offices on the second floor.

In 1929, Burns carried out a tree planting project on that portion of his Bow Valley Ranch which flanked both sides of the main highway south of Calgary. Pending the success of this venture, a somewhat dubious matter during the dry 30's, he intended carrying out similar schemes on roads leading to or past his other ranches.<sup>35</sup> Considering the beauty which the trees eventually added to the stretch of highway south of Calgary, it seems a pity that projects of this type have not been more wide-spread in Alberta.

In the fall of 1929, Burns bought the old Two Dot Ranch ten miles west of Nanton, Alberta.<sup>36</sup> At the time, the property consisted of a block of land of 4300 acres, well watered by twenty springs.<sup>37</sup> During Burns' ownership the ranch was mainly devoted to the raising of sheep.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, June 23, 1928.

<sup>35</sup>Interview Mr. Wm. Mayhew of Midnapore, September 3, 1955. (Mr. Mayhew was Burns' resident gardener for many years).

<sup>36</sup>Interview Mr. Claude Gallinger of Edmonton, August 10, 1961. (Mr. Gallinger bought the ranch in 1943).

<sup>37</sup>Interview Mr. Owen Doyle of Calgary, August 28, 1958. (A former foreman of the Two Dot Ranch).

<sup>38</sup>Interview Mr. Doyle of Calgary, August 28, 1958.





The Two Dot Ranch dates back to 1885 when a 44,000 acre lease was obtained by George<sup>39</sup> and Harry B. Alexander.<sup>40</sup> During the years these Irishmen operated the property, it was known as the Alexander Ranch,<sup>41</sup> but in time their brand, two dots on the left hip,<sup>42</sup> gave the property its present name. At a date which has not been established, the ranch was sold to Joe Pemberton and Francis B. Ward.<sup>43</sup> Their partnership was later dissolved, and Ward went to British Columbia where he managed the famous Douglas Lake Cattle Company.<sup>44</sup> Later, Pemberton sold the ranch to a trio consisting of John MacFarland and George and Martin Armstrong.<sup>45</sup> At a date which seems to be 1920, they sold the ranch to the 5th Earl of Minto,<sup>46</sup> whose father had served as Governor General of Canada from 1898 to 1904. The brother-in-law of the 5th Earl, Herby Cook of Montreal, managed the ranch until it was sold to Burns.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>39</sup>L.V. Kelly, The Range Men, (Toronto: Wm. Briggs, 1913), p. 194.

<sup>40</sup>Macleod Gazette, November 16, 1886. (A brand advertisement).

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

<sup>43</sup>Interview Mr. John M. Glendenning of Nanton, October 6, 1956. (A pioneer of the district).

<sup>44</sup>Interview Mr. Glendenning, October 6, 1956.

<sup>45</sup>Fred W. Ings, "Tales from the Midway Ranch," Canadian Cattlemen, (Vol. 7, No. 4, March, 1944), p. 163.

<sup>46</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, April 23, 1920.

<sup>47</sup>Interview Mr. O. Doyle of Calgary, August 28, 1958.



Some mention of the relationship of Patrick Burns to the Rio Alto or OH Ranch seems necessary for his estate acquired full title to it one year after his death.<sup>48</sup> In 1918, an American firm, the Mayer and Lage Farming and Ranching Co. Ltd., asked Burns to secure it a Canadian ranch in order to expedite a livestock contract they held with the Belgium government.<sup>49</sup> After World War I the company experienced difficulties, and Burns assumed the direction of the ranch as he had a substantial investment in the enterprise.<sup>50</sup>

The Rio Alto Ranch was founded by Fred W. Ings in 1883<sup>51</sup> although Lafayette French and O.H. Smith seem to have operated in the same location for a very brief time.<sup>52</sup> Ings' brand, the OH, was acquired when he bought Smith's cattle.<sup>53</sup> Fred Ings' brother, Walter, was the owner of the ranch when it was sold to Mayer and Lage.<sup>54</sup> In the latter period in which the American firm and Burns were involved in the place, it consisted of about 20,000 acres of deeded and leased lands.<sup>55</sup> The ranch lies by the Highwood River a few miles west of

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<sup>48</sup>Interview Mr. Thomas Farrell of Calgary, July 24, 1956. (A ranch manager for P. Burns).

<sup>49</sup>Interview Mr. J.H. Kelly of Calgary, August 30, 1961. (Mr. Kelly was once Mr. Burns' private secretary).

<sup>50</sup>Interview Mr. Kelly of Calgary, August 30, 1961.

<sup>51</sup>Ings, op. cit., (Vol. 4, No. 2, September, 1941), p. 59.

<sup>52</sup>Interview Mr. Bert Sheppard of Longview, August 21, 1956. (Mr. Sheppard runs the ranch for the present owners).

<sup>53</sup>Ings, op. cit., p. 59.

<sup>54</sup>Ings, op. cit., (Vol. 6, No. 4, March, 1944), p. 146.

<sup>55</sup>Interview Mr. Sheppard of Longview, August 21, 1956.



Longview, a hamlet south-west of Calgary.

At undetermined dates in the 1920's and 1930's, Burns secured title to several small properties in Alberta which did not materially affect the scope of his livestock activities. He obtained the Findlay farm of 1,920 acres a few miles north-west of High River. West of Macleod he held the Reardon property of 583.5 acres. Several miles east of Three Hills he had the 316 acre Klassen farm. South of Lougheed he secured the Daly property of 639 acres. In the area north-east of Cochrane he held title to several pieces of land of varying sizes totalling 6,559.5 acres.<sup>56</sup>

The previous owners of some of these properties had approached Burns for financial assistance in the post-War I slump or in the depression of the 1930's. Finally, to clear bank mortgages which Burns had guaranteed, or to wipe out direct indebtedness to Burns, the owners transferred their land to him. The writer knows of certain ranches where the financial indebtedness to Burns had in effect put him in control of their operations.<sup>57</sup> In two cases he was even paying the taxes. Many ranchers would not have been able to save their lands had they not received some timely assistance from Burns when the banks refused further loans.

A quick review of the major ranches Burns owned, leased, or

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<sup>56</sup>Information secured from the files of P. Burns estate, Michael Building, Calgary.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid. (The writer does not believe the individuals concerned, or their descendants, would appreciate specific names being used).





operated during the 1930's would serve to show the extent of his livestock operations in his closing years. There was the Bow Valley and its associated properties, the CK and its adjoining property, the Ricardo, the Circle, the Walrond, the Bradfield, the Lineham, the Glengarry, the Bar U, the Flying E, the 76, the Two Dot and the Rio Alto. The total acreage of these properties and his smaller holdings in Alberta and British Columbia was about 425,000 acres.

In the early 1930's Patrick Burns terminated a Mexican mining venture which heretofore has not been mentioned. The background of the scheme can be best presented by a newspaper story published in 1900.

#### Mr. P. Burns' Good Fortune

'Unto him that hath shall be given' is well exemplified in the case of Mr. Patrick Burns, the cattle king of the west. Some years ago he assisted a mining expert and engineer whom he met in British Columbia but the man did not make a success of it and went away. Mr. Burns lost sight of him. Some time ago he wrote Mr. Burns saying that he had discovered rich copper deposits in Old Mexico and asking Mr. Burns to assist him in development, Mr. Burns sent a man down to report. He returned and said every thing the discoverer had repeated was true. Not satisfied with this Mr. Burns sent another man to report and he came back with the same story. Then Mr. Burns decided to go down himself. He has just returned after having secured control of the property which comprises a veritable mountain of copper and supposed to be one of the largest deposits of copper on the continent.<sup>58</sup>

Burns secured the mineral rights on 100,000 acres of land near Ensenada on the peninsula of Lower California. His holdings were operated

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<sup>58</sup>The Macleod Gazette and Alberta Live Stock Record, November 9, 1900. (A reprint from the Medicine Hat News).



under the name of the Santa Catrina Development Company. The enterprise never paid off in the way that was first expected. Development problems were encountered and the instability of Mexican politics from 1910 to 1925 was not conducive to capital investment. Later, Mexican laws hamstrung the operations of foreign companies, and in the 1930's, Burns disposed of his interests.<sup>59</sup>

It should also be said that Burns had many mining interests in British Columbia, particularly in the 1890's and early 1900's.<sup>60</sup> The Coalmont Colleries was one of his better known ventures in that province.<sup>61</sup> In addition to the Sheep Creek coal scheme in southwestern Alberta discussed in an earlier chapter, Burns later acquired a substantial interest in ten square miles of coal lands in the Peace River district of British Columbia.<sup>62</sup> He had extensive interests in the Turner Valley oil field during the developmental years.<sup>63</sup> He was the largest debenture holder in the old Calgary Gas Company, one of

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<sup>59</sup>Interview Mr. J. Howard Kelly of Calgary, August 1, 1956. (Mr. Kelly was once P. Burns' private secretary).

<sup>60</sup>The Index to Annual Reports of the Minister of Mines of the Province of British Columbia for the Years 1874 to 1936 (Victoria: King's Printer, 1938), passim. (Items have been noticed in newspapers of the period but the information is too brief to permit any worthwhile remarks).

<sup>61</sup>Interview Mr. Kelly of Calgary, August 1, 1956.

<sup>62</sup>Interview Mr. Kelly of Calgary, August 1, 1956.

<sup>63</sup>Interview Mr. Kelly of Calgary, August 1, 1956.



the two firms that first supplied that city with gas.<sup>64</sup> At one time he operated a small gold mine in the State of Washington.<sup>65</sup> Burns' investments in mining were generally disappointing.<sup>66</sup> Perhaps he was out of his element in these endeavours.

Burns did not wait until the late years of his life to participate in worthwhile endeavours. Around the turn of the century he can be seen contributing funds for a band,<sup>67</sup> for the soldiers of the Boer War,<sup>68</sup> for a person in ill health,<sup>69</sup> for the building of a bridge,<sup>70</sup> for a Labor Day celebration,<sup>71</sup> for the Salvation Army,<sup>72</sup> and providing living quarters for a family in need of a home.<sup>73</sup> Calgary hospitals, the Holy Cross and the General, were frequent recipients of gifts of meat and fowl,<sup>74</sup> especially at the Christmas

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<sup>65</sup>Interview Mr. Ed Hoschka of Calgary, March 3, 1956. (A long-time employee). Perhaps the First Thought mine near Orient, Washington. See Vancouver Province, April 17, 1905.

<sup>66</sup>Interview Mr. Kelly of Calgary, August 1, 1956.

<sup>67</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, October 23, 1899.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., January 4, 1900.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., March 10, 1900.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., April 16, 1903.

<sup>71</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, September 10, 1900.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., September 4, 1904.

<sup>73</sup>Macleod Gazette, June 20, 1907.

<sup>74</sup>Calgary Daily Herald: January 4, 1900, January 12, 1900; August 3, 1902; January 6, 1902; April 25, 1904; The Albertan and the Alberta Tribune, January 4, 1901.





season. The Y.M.C.A. found him an enthusiastic supporter<sup>75</sup> as did the St. Mary's Club.<sup>76</sup> The products of his company were enjoyed by the inmates of a jail on Christmas Day.<sup>77</sup> A distant cause would also get his support, for example, a donation of \$5,000 to help the victims of the San Francisco earthquake.<sup>78</sup>

In respect of his charities, Burns believed in the principle of "no advertising". An illustration would be his sending of a mentally retarded boy to England for schooling, and looking after him until his death.<sup>79</sup> An employee, familiar with the latter period of his life, calculates that there were years when his personal charities exceeded \$50,000, but the public at large knew nothing about it. He tried to help individuals who were deserving, but his purse was often used by "leeches" who could pass a hard-luck story. There were times when he was judged generous to a fault.<sup>80</sup>

In his will dated January 15, 1932, Patrick Burns made charitable bequests to the value of \$142,500. Redeemable  $4\frac{1}{2}\%$  non-voting, non-cumulative, preferable shares of the capital stock of Burns Foundation (Limited) of a par value of \$100 each were assigned as follows:

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<sup>75</sup>Calgary Daily Herald: October 27, 1904; November 18, 1908; July 3, 1909.

<sup>76</sup>Morning Albertan, August 6, 1906; June 13, 1907.

<sup>77</sup>Macleod Advertiser, December 28, 1911.

<sup>78</sup>Morning Albertan, April 24, 1906.

<sup>79</sup>Interview Miss Kathleen Ellis of Penticton, B.C., August 8, 1955. (A sister-in-law of Burns).

<sup>80</sup>Tighe's Notes, pp. 27-28.



\$20,000 worth to the Governing Body of the Jesuit Fathers' College at Edmonton; \$50,000 worth to the Roman Catholic Bishop of the Diocese of Calgary for the purpose of assisting in the erection of a cathedral; \$15,000 worth to the Governing Body of the Roman Catholic College at Edmonton; \$20,000 worth to the Father Lacombe Home at Midnapore; \$2,500 worth to the Alberta Branch of the Navy League of Canada; \$5,000 worth to the Salvation Army in Calgary; \$2,500 worth to the Calgary Branch of the Canadian Red Cross Society; \$2,500 worth to the Junior Red Cross Society of Alberta; \$5,000 worth to the Children's Shelter in Calgary; \$5,000 worth for a fund for the widows and orphans of members of the police force of Calgary; \$5,000 worth for a fund for the widows and orphans of members of the fire brigade of Calgary; \$2,500 worth to Branch No. 52 of the British Empire Service League, Tubercular Section of the Canadian Legion; \$2,500 worth to the First Battalion, The Calgary Regiment (50th Battalion C.E.F); \$2,500 worth to the Calgary Branch of the Provincial Boy Scout Association; and \$2,500 to assist members of the Southern Alberta Pioneers' and Old Timers' Association. Annuities were provided for a number of his old friends.<sup>81</sup>

After provisions for his relatives were complied with, one-third of the remainder of his estate was to be used to form the "Burns Memorial Trust", the income of which was to be divided equally among

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<sup>81</sup>Information taken from a copy of Patrick Burns' will given to the writer by Mr. R.J. Burns of Calgary. The will is dated January 15, 1932.



the Father Lacombe Home, the Calgary branch of the Salvation Army, the Children's Shelter, the fund for the widows and orphans of members of the Calgary police force, and the fund for the widows and orphans of the Calgary fire brigade.<sup>82</sup> Patrick Burns' estate was estimated to have a value of \$3,833,413 after his death,<sup>83</sup> but it has grown since that time.

Burns placed a high value on education. In addition to the help he gave students on a private basis,<sup>84</sup> he furthered education in other ways. He was one of those who lent support in the founding of Western Canada College at Calgary in the early 1900's.<sup>85</sup> In 1920, he instituted the P. Burns Scholarship of a value of \$150 annually. The scholarship was awarded to the student in Calgary getting the highest marks in the Grade XII examinations and proceeding to the University of Alberta.<sup>86</sup> In 1925, he donated \$20,000 toward the erection of St. Joseph's College in Edmonton.<sup>87</sup> About the same time he donated to Vancouver College, Vancouver, \$5,000 for a school build-

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<sup>82</sup>Information taken from a copy of Patrick Burns' will given to the writer by Mr. R.J. Burns of Calgary.

<sup>83</sup>Edmonton Journal, November 21, 1937.

<sup>84</sup>Interview Miss Kathleen Ellis of Penticton, B.C., August 18, 1955. (A sister-in-law of P. Burns).

<sup>85</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, June 4, 1907.

<sup>86</sup>Calendar of the University of Alberta Session 1925-26 (Edmonton: University of Alberta Printing Press, 1925), p. 48.

<sup>87</sup>Edmonton Journal, October 23, 1925.





ing, \$2,500 for a residence, and 3½ acres of land to enlarge its property.<sup>88</sup>

Perhaps Burns was too impressed with the importance of a university education. Perhaps he felt penalized by his own brief schooling, for he was determined that his son, Michael, would have the "advantages" which he himself had not enjoyed. Trusting to the advice of others, the father mishandled his son's education. He failed to realize that he could have given his son lessons from his own life which would have had a more practical value.<sup>89</sup>

At an early time, Burns was active in organizations which advanced the interests of the community at large. He was a district representative to the Western Stock Growers' Association for years and was later president and honorary president of that body.<sup>90</sup> In the interests of agriculture he donated prizes for livestock shows.<sup>91</sup> He identified himself with the Calgary Board of Trade.<sup>92</sup> At the turn of

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<sup>88</sup>Information in a letter received from W.B. Walsh, Vice-Principal of Vancouver College, Vancouver.

<sup>89</sup>Tighe's Notes, pp. 27, 46, 47.

<sup>90</sup>The Western Stock Growers' Association at Calgary has a minute book which supports this statement. The minute book covers the period from 1897 to 1919.

<sup>91</sup>Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture for the Province of Alberta from the first of September, 1905 to the thirty-first of December, 1906 (Edmonton: Government Printer, 1907), p. 182 and p. 190. (Burns' name appears frequently throughout the years).

<sup>92</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, January 16, 1903.



the century he helped to foster such sports as curling,<sup>93</sup> football,<sup>94</sup> and lacrosse.<sup>95</sup>

Burns' devotion to his faith and his support of the endeavours of his church in Western Canada were recognized on two occasions. In 1914, Pope Benedict XV created him a Knight Commander of the Order of St. Gregory the Great in the civil class.<sup>96</sup> It was said that this was the first time such an honour had been given to anyone in Canada.<sup>97</sup> It was Patrick Burns who had the privilege of unveiling the statue of Father Lacombe at St. Albert, Alberta, on July 21, 1929.<sup>98</sup>

Two small churches stand side by side by the highway passing through Midnapore, a hamlet south of Calgary. One is the Roman Catholic church, St. Patrick's, the other is the Anglican church, St. Paul's. Years ago Burns sent some men to the nearby Bow Valley Ranch to paint the buildings. Father Newman happened to visit the ranch and wondered if there would be any paint left over that could be used to paint St. Patrick's. The foreman of the ranch, Ed Hoschka,

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<sup>93</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, January 27, 1899; February 4, 1902; The Albertan and Alberta Tribune, May 6, 1902.

<sup>94</sup>The Albertan and Alberta Tribune, April 19, 1902.

<sup>95</sup>Calgary Daily Herald: May 26, 1902; May 11, 1903.

<sup>96</sup>Ibid., December 31, 1914.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid. (The writer has not verified this claim).

<sup>98</sup>The Western Catholic, July 25, 1929. (A periodical published in Edmonton, Alberta).

<sup>99</sup>Interview Mr. Ed Hoschka of Calgary, March 3, 1954. (Other variations of the story have been heard. It is possible that the paint job had to be renewed).



had Father Newman phone Burns at Calgary. His answer was, "Why sure, why sure, tell me what paint is needed and we will paint it." Later, Burns happened to drive down from Calgary and stopped to see how the painting of the church was coming along. As he was leaving he said, "Now, whenever you're finished, be sure to paint the other one too."<sup>99</sup>

When it was erroneously believed that Patrick Burns would celebrate his seventy-fifth birthday on July 6, 1931,<sup>100</sup> his friends decided that this would be an opportunity to honour him. The date also coincided with the opening day of the annual Calgary Stampede which is a festive occasion for a great many Albertans. For a year a committee of citizens prepared for the birthday party which was scheduled for the Palliser Hotel on the evening of the first day of the Stampede. Day by day the names of people who could accept invitations were received. Kenneth Forbes, a noted Canadian artist, was commissioned to do a portrait of Dr. Burns. An illuminated address signed by hundreds of his friends was prepared. A birthday cake weighing 3,000 pounds and seven and one-half feet tall, and containing such ingredients as 380 dozen eggs, 285 pounds of sugar and 304 pounds of butter was baked.<sup>101</sup> On the morning of July 6, the celebrations started with the Stampede parade. Riding in the cowboy section was Mr. Burns and two old friends, A.E. Cross and A.J. Maclean.

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<sup>100</sup>According to Patrick Burns' certificate of baptism he would have been 77 on July 16, 1931.

<sup>101</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, (Magazine Section), July 4, 1931, p. 1.





The three men were the surviving members of the "Big Four" who helped launch the first Calgary Stampede of 1912. Float after float in the parade was decorated in a manner to honour Burns.<sup>102</sup>

In the evening seven hundred people from all walks of life gathered at the Palliser Hotel for the banquet. A hush fell over the gathering when it was learned that Mr. Burns was ill and possibly would not be able to attend, but shortly after, apprehension was relieved when it was announced that he was on his way. Deafening cheers greeted his arrival. The portrait and scroll were duly presented but the highlight of the day was reached when a certain telegram was read.<sup>103</sup> It stated:

His Excellency the Governor General on the recommendation of the prime minister, has been pleased this day to summon to the Senate of Canada, Patrick Burns, Esquire, of the city of Calgary, in the province of Alberta.<sup>104</sup>

The announcement was greeted with thunderous applause.<sup>105</sup>

Obviously overcome by emotion and pale from the exertions of the day, Mr. Burns thanked his audience for their tribute to him, and revealed in a few words his greatness. 'This senatorship,' he said, 'I do not deserve it. I cannot express my feelings; you have all been so kind to me --an old cattleman.' He spoke only a few minutes. There have been longer speeches heard in Calgary, more finely phrased ones, but never was one heard with more respect.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>102</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, July 6, 1931, p. 3.

<sup>103</sup>Calgary Albertan, July 7, 1931, p. 1; Calgary Daily Herald, July 7, 1931, p. 3.

<sup>104</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, July 7, 1931, p. 7.

<sup>105</sup>Calgary Albertan, July 7, p. 1.

<sup>106</sup>Ibid.



Patrick Burns' appointment to the Senate had nothing to do with his political leanings. As early as 1903, Liberals in Calgary were trying to induce him to run for a seat in the House of Commons.<sup>110</sup> Another source states that he was a great admirer of Sir Wilfred Laurier.<sup>111</sup> In the political controversy which arose in 1911 over the matter of a reciprocity treaty with the United States, he was at first rather opposed to a treaty,<sup>112</sup> but by March of that year he fully supported one.<sup>113</sup> In 1924, there was a move to get him appointed to the Senate, but in discussing the matter a newspaper stated: "Mr. Burns, it is known resents anything in the nature of a canvass, and positively will make no effort of any kind whatsoever to secure the position."<sup>114</sup> In 1925, Burns supported R.B. Bennett of the Conservative party in an election campaign on the grounds that he was the best man for the job,<sup>115</sup> but a 1932 biographical note on Burns listed him as a Liberal.<sup>116</sup> Burns' own position was stated

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<sup>110</sup>Macleod Gazette: November 6, 1903; December 11, 1903.

<sup>111</sup>F.M. Black, "Patrick Burns as I Knew Him" (A clipping in the Calgary Public Library dated March 27, 1937. Unable to identify source).

<sup>112</sup>J.C. Hopkins (editor), The Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs 1911 (Toronto: The Annual Review Publishing Co., 1912), p. 40.

<sup>113</sup>Strathcona Plaindealer, March 10, 1911; September 19, 1911.

<sup>114</sup>Calgary Albertan, May 11, 1928, p. 18.

<sup>115</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, October 24, 1925.

<sup>116</sup>Ross Hamilton (editor), Prominent Men of Canada 1931-32 (Montreal: National Publishing Co., 1932), p. 554.



as follows: "These fellows who can talk so easily used to say that I was too much after the cattle to go into politics."<sup>117</sup> Prime Minister R.B. Bennett appointed Burns to the Senate as an honour to an old friend<sup>118</sup> and fellow Calgarian whose career he had been familiar with since 1897.

In the little over three years in which Burns' health permitted him to attend the meetings of the Senate, he made but one speech, that being on May 10, 1933. The Senate was discussing the new railway that had been completed to the Hudson Bay in 1931. Politicians of the more practical type were treating the railway gingerly as they knew how important this road was in the eyes of the farm vote of Western Canada. Burns' remarks probably confounded many Western ears but right or wrong he stated his views as follows:

Honourable senators, in discussing the Hudson Bay route I shall confine myself for the most part to its suitability as an outlet for the shipment of Western cattle to the British market....

...I am afraid the Hudson Bay route would not be suitable for our winterfed cattle; but we can take advantage of it for our grass-fed cattle, which we ship from August until the close of navigation.

In order to take advantage of the port of Churchill it would be necessary to induce our shipping companies to send their cattle boats from Montreal and other ports to Churchill. It is pretty expensive to fit boats with cattle stalls, and it would not be reasonable to expect them to make this outlay for a comparatively limited number of shipments. In short, I would say the Hudson Bay route would be very unsatisfactory until the latter

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<sup>117</sup>Calgary Albertan, May 11, 1928, p. 18.

<sup>118</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, July 7, 1931, p. 7. (Bennett's congratulatory message).





part of the regular cattle-shipping season.

In September, 1931, I travelled over the Hudson Bay railway to Churchill with the Canadian Board of Trade party. It was a very good roadbed. The captain of a ship then in port took us out into the bay. While we were on this sail he told us the season was short, varying from three to three and one-half months.

I do not agree with my honourable friend from Saskatchewan (Hon. Mr. Gillis) that the railway runs through number one farming country. As an old farmer, I should not care to farm there....

... I should say that if there is mineral wealth along this line of railway it will help materially in developing Churchill. The trouble to-day is that if vessels come to Churchill for cattle or wheat they have to come empty. What cargo can they bring?

Hon. Mr. Gillis: Welsh coal.

Hon. Mr. Burns: We have more extensive deposits of coal in Alberta than in any other section of North America... We in the West have no need for Welsh coal.

Of course, I realize it takes time for any country to develop. I settled in Manitoba fifty-five years ago, when there was very little settlement west of Portage la Prairie. Vancouver as a great national port was unknown. Last year, 15,981 ships entered that port. Of this number 1,123 were deep sea ships. When I was at Vancouver in 1885 there were only a few small craft in port. If Churchill should show an equal development, it would be most gratifying to all Canadians.

Hon. Mr. Gillis: That development is coming.

Hon. Mr. Burns: I may say to my honourable friend what I should also like, in closing, to say to another honourable member of this Chamber. The senator from Boissevain (Hon. Mr. Schaffner) said yesterday the people of Manitoba had been talking of the Hudson Bay route for fifty years. It is true that we all have talked of it for fifty years, but it is a pity that before the Hudson Bay Railway was built we had not talked of it for another fifty years.<sup>119</sup>

The passage of the years has shown that Burns was closer to the truth than many may have imagined. Traffic on the Hudson Bay railway has never developed in the way that was anticipated, and the problems

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<sup>119</sup>Debates of the Senate of the Dominion of Canada 1932-33  
(Ottawa: King's Printer, 1933), pp. 478-479.



of one-way cargoes and a short shipping season remain. The great bulk of the produce of Western Canada continues to move over the traditional routes. Burns' suggestion that mineral wealth in the area would materially improve the prospects of the line may be borne out with the continued development of ore bodies in the northern part of Manitoba.

Patrick Burns' role in the development of Western Canada may now be reviewed. His influence on the livestock industry was greater than any one other individual. He searched for and found new markets for Western beef, pork and mutton. The markets were there and would have been developed had Burns never lived but it seems doubtful whether they would have been opened as quickly and efficiently. In capturing new markets he benefited financially but so did others.

While in Manitoba, Burns was quick to utilize the new trans-continental railway to find a market for hogs. When beef contracts on railway projects brought him westward to Alberta, he wasted no time in taking the lead in opening the British Columbia market, especially in the Kootenays. He pioneered in the shipment of frozen meats from Alberta. His activities during the gold rush days of the Yukon and his attempt to open markets in Australia, and later in Japan, illustrate his initiative in the meat trade. At all times he helped supply the eastern markets of Canada, and shared in the export trade with Britain. Like others, he entered the Western trade with small butchering facilities, but he was the first to establish





large packing houses in Calgary and Vancouver. In Edmonton he shared in the establishment of the packing house industry.

The way in which Burns organized his business empire gave his undertakings a stability which benefited himself as well as others. He had his ranches to insure a portion of his livestock requirements. Animals which were not sold on the hoof were sent to his abattoirs and packing houses to be processed. The produce of these plants was distributed through his wholesale and retail outlets. The vertical integration of his business meant that he was a producer, a manufacturer, and a retailer. In consequence, he had a financial interest in every aspect of the meat trade, and could not be disinterested in the problems of any segment of the population. Any contraction or expansion in one branch of his business tended to influence the growth of the other two. A healthy business atmosphere throughout the country was particularly desirable for success in his undertakings. The scale of the vertical integration of Burns' business must be considered as unique in the meat trade of Western Canada. Burns' success is proof of the soundness of his policies. In time his varied enterprises provided employment for hundreds of workers in each of the four western provinces.

At the turn of the century, Burns did much to stimulate hog production in Alberta. In his ranching efforts he took the lead in winter-feeding cattle for the spring market, a practice which many others failed to see as the way to avoid glutting the fall market with grass-fed cattle. As a rancher, he did not see the advance of the





homesteaders as an unfavourable event. In the difficult years following the winter of 1907, he strove to keep cattle production at an adequate level. He advocated mixed-farming and expanded his ranching activities in those areas unattractive to the farmers, and from which other ranchers had withdrawn in discouragement.

At times, the scope of his operations threatened to be too successful. In 1907, a formal inquiry into the meat trade permitted his critics to voice their complaints, but as many of their allegations were not substantiated under oath, the Beef Commission produced a comparatively mild report. Around 1912 and 1913, when meat prices had again made ranching more attractive, there were complaints that Burns controlled too many ranch lands and that restrictions should be placed on the size of leases. Burns said that he welcomed any measure that would encourage others to engage in cattle production in a systematic way. In the latter part of World War I when cattle prices once again reached a new peak, he disposed of many of his properties.

Toward the end of World War I, Burns entered into the operation of creameries, cheese factories and fruit houses. His actions in these fields tended to promote the more orderly production and distribution of the products concerned.

Burns' most creative years, the era between the mid 1890's and the outbreak of World War I, fell in that time when robber baron tactics and corruption in high places was all too often the road to success in Canada. Burns obtained both success and an enviable



reputation. He was a shrewd and acquisitive business man, but those who knew him respected his honesty and fair dealing. He was a builder not a parasite.

There were many things about the man that stood well with the pioneers of our West. Denied the advantages of a good education, he was a self-made man who rose from poverty and obscurity by his own efforts. He experienced hardships and took risks, and when his wealth accumulated, it was no gulf between him and the less fortunate. He was ever ready to help those in need or to support a worthwhile cause. A respected Canadian statesman made this generous tribute to his memory. "Pat Burns became an institution in the West. He had no peer; he was the leader in that country for certainly four decades."<sup>120</sup>

The last few years of Senator Burns' life were shadowed by unhappy events. One by one his old friends were passing on, and he was learning what it was like to be lonely. The depression of the 1930's was at its height. The prairies lay parched by drought. At his office Burns could look at the dismal returns he was getting for his livestock. The great packing house empire, which he formerly owned, was in difficulties.

In the last interview he ever held with the press, the depression was the main theme of the conversation. Not once did Burns voice any fears for the future. The interview ranged over such topics as

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<sup>120</sup>The Right Honourable Arthur Meighen, Unrevised and Unrepented Debating Speeches and Others (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin & Co., 1949), pp. 297-298.



opportunity, thinking for one's self, the right spirit, the appeal mining held for him, relief, poverty, marriage, and beauty. On every topic the old man's views were fresh and alive. For the pessimists of the 1930's his challenge was, "Give me my youth again, my youth and a straw hat and a pair of overalls, and you may have my wealth!"<sup>121</sup>

In 1935, Patrick Burns suffered a serious stroke. He lost his power of speech and was under a nurse's care.<sup>122</sup> On September 18, 1936, his son Michael, barely past his thirtieth year, died suddenly at his father's home.<sup>123</sup> There were no grandchildren to take his place.<sup>124</sup> The news of Michael's death was kept from his father.<sup>125</sup> On the morning of February 24, 1937, a flag fluttered at half-mast at the residence on Thirteenth Avenue West.<sup>126</sup> Pat Burns was dead.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>121</sup>Edna Kells, "Senator Burns Flings Challenge to Today's Youth," Lethbridge Herald, July 6, 1936, p. 8. (The interview took place earlier but was withheld from publication because of Mr. Burns' serious illness).

<sup>122</sup>Interview Miss Kathleen Ellis of Penticton, B.C., August 18, 1955. (A sister-in-law of P. Burns).

<sup>123</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, September 18, 1936, p. 15.

<sup>124</sup>Michael married Millicent Elizabeth Ives in 1931 but there were no children. (Information taken from data gathered by Mr. R.J. Burns of Calgary).

<sup>125</sup>Interview Miss Kathleen Ellis of Penticton, August 28, 1955.

<sup>126</sup>Calgary Daily Herald, February 24, 1937, p. 9.

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5. CORRESPONDENCE

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Mr. Chris Bartsch, Calgary.

Mr. Phil Bossard, Calgary.

Mr. Frank Brazil, Calgary.

Mme. Isabelle Burnada, Vancouver.

Mrs. John Burns, Calgary.

Mr. R.J. Burns, Calgary.

Mr. L.B. Cameron, Edmonton.

Mr. Bob Carry, Turner Valley, Alberta.

Mr. Herb Clark, Calgary.

Mr. N.L. Chapman, Edmonton.

Mr. Chris Christianson, Brooks, Alberta.

Mr. Frank Collicut, Calgary.

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Mr. Geo. Coutts, Calgary.

Mrs. Ralph Davey, Brooks, Alberta.

Mr. Owen Doyle, Calgary.

Mr. Bill Duggan, Calgary.





Mr. Charles Duggan, Camrose, Alberta.  
Mr. Jack Duggan, Edmonton.  
Miss Kathleen Ellis, Penticton, B.C.  
Mr. Thomas Farrell, Calgary.  
Mr. Bob Foster, Calgary.  
Miss Odette de Foras, High River, Alberta.  
Mr. Claude Gallinger, Edmonton.  
Mr. John Glendenning, Nanton, Alberta.  
Miss Isobelle Grant, Calgary.  
Mr. Douglas Hardwick, Calgary.  
Mr. Wm. Henry, High River, Alberta.  
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Mr. Bill McRae, Calgary.  
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